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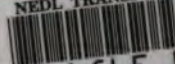
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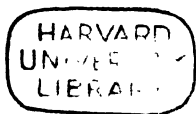
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BEN BRACE,

THE LAST OF NELSON'S AGAMEMNONS.

CHAPTER I.

A sailor's life 's the life for me,
He takes his duty merrily ;
If winds can whistle he can sing,
Still faithful to his friend and king.
DIBDIN.

I WAS born at Cawsand Bay, July 5th, 1758. My father was a fisherman ; and a pair better suited to each other, than he and his wife, never was known. Father was short, stout, and saucy : mother was all milk and modesty. It was many a year before she mustered up courage enough to crimp a skate ; and she never boiled a lobster in her life without dropping a tear when the poor creature cried like a child : — and well it might cry ; it's no joke to be shoved into a boiling bath, and to be changed from a sea monster into a soldier. She was all tenderness, dear soul ! and if she had been more of a woman and less of a mother, I should now have been a follower of my father's trade, and have *netted* a nice property.

I deserted ; and this is how it happened. Because I was a curly-pated boy and reckoned as much like my mother 'as one rope-yarn is to another, she never would allow me to go out with my father ; although I would stand by the hour gazing on the sea as it rolled into Plymouth Sound, and the higher it rolled, the louder it blew, the more murky the day looked, the more I sighed to face the

dangers, and the more earnestly begged my father to take me with him. My father was rather under that most enviable of control, a wife's government, and that was one reason why I was a discharged petitioner; but the strongest reason which operated on his mind, was the unusual roughness of the winter, and the consequent increased danger of the fisherman.

"No, no, boy," he would say, making his voice as tender as his rough life would permit, — "no, no; when you get a piece more spliced on to your brace, then you may try; — next summer, lad, you shall come with me. There, that's a good boy, don't cry, but run home to mother, and make yourself useful. Next year, Ben, and you'll be a man."

Next year never came, at least for me to claim the promise; for one night I left Cawsand, my father, mother, and sister — (she was a little beauty just toddling about, and just wise enough to know a Newfoundland dog from her curly-pated brother) — and got a ferry across from Edgecombe to Mutton Cove, and what by the kindness of a waggoner and the use of my own legs, I managed to get to Portsmouth. Here I was received on board the *Raisonné*, about a fortnight before my future officer, Nelson, had joined the ship. I am now, as may be seen, a Greenwich pensioner; I wear my cocked-hat athwartships, like Napoleon; am the jolliest dog in the establishment, and the last surviving seaman of the old *Agamemnon*s. I had all the shot-holes on the right side, which consequently gives me a slight heel to port; and when my larboard bow "look-out" gets a little dim with draining a glass or two to the memory of him who will be remembered whilst the country exists, why I not unfrequently make a wrong cast; but being known as the last of the *Agamemnon*s, every waterman in the place has in turns been my guide and supporter. Is it odd, then, that my reputation should increase with my years, and as time becomes daily more distant from October, 1805, that the young and the ambitious should become eager to hear of the exploits of our greatest naval hero from the mouth of one who participated in almost every action, and was an

eye-witness of the moments of his retirement, — who was his coxswain when afloat, and his servant when on shore? I am that man! I am Ben Brace, Nelson's coxswain and his valet. I was by him when he was a fore-top man, and I held his head when he was wounded at the Nile.

I had a mess-mate, who is keeping his dead reckoning now, — he has been stowed away by the Quarter-master of the Graves: he and all the rest of them look like hammocks in a netting. Tom Toprail and I have seen many a strange sight. He had been burnt out of one ship, and blown out of another. One night, when we were sitting under the lee of the weather bulwark on the forecastle, I said to him, "Tom, let the old Agamemnon roll about in this Gulf of Lyons, as they call it, until she rolls the sea smooth; here we are, safe and snug: and now tell me about that fire and your brother, which some one said was the reason you never lit a pipe if a rope-yarn was near. Come, share this glass with me, and begin."

"This is all about it," he replied, "and no man knows it better; it is not half a century that can daub out the lines of my memory, and I remember it just as well as if it happened yesterday."

"No doubt you do, Tom," said I; "I remember longer ago than that. But blaze away, my boy."

"Well, then," continued Tom, "since you can't stopper your impatience, I suppose I must go smack at it. It was in the year 1779 that I belonged to the Glasgow, of twenty guns, when she was stationed in the West Indies. I was then seventeen years old; and though I say it myself, who perhaps ought not to say it, yet I was as good a looking fellow as ever weathered the Palisades* at Jamaica, or sucked a monkey† at Barbadoes. My brother Bill was on board with me; he was a year younger than myself — but such a fellow! Lord love you, his heart was all for me; he was a brother and a friend: — I could spin you such a yarn about him! Well, brother Bill was stationed in the fore-top, and so was I; he was in the starboard-watch,

* The Palisades is the burying-ground of Port Royal.

† Drinking rum out of a cocoa-nut, the milk being drawn off and the spirit substituted.

I in the larboard ; we were both light hands, and therefore regular cloud-brushers, always the highest up, always at the light sails aloft. We had been cruising off St. Domingo, when, finding that we had no luck there, we steered away for Jamaica, and came to an anchor in Montego Bay."

"Stopper over all for a moment," said I : "did n't you find the Badger there?"

"Ay, surely."

"I know all about it," I said, as I twisted the end of the main-top gallant brace round my wrist to save me from a lurch. "Why, Nelson commanded the Badger and I was in the jolly-boat when——"

"Avaust there, Ben!" said Tom ; "it will all come out now. Well, we came into Montego Bay, as I said before ; and there we found the Badger at anchor. We shortened sail, man-of-war fashion, altogether, for the cat had taught some of us to skip. Bill and I were on the foretop-gallant yard furling the sail, when the first lieutenant called out to one of the midshipmen, to run below and see what smoke that was coming up the after-hatchway. Well, I had done my duty aloft, and had come down on the forecastle, when there was the devil's own rumpus about beating to quarters, calling the firemen with their buckets ; and before we had time to say Jack Robinson, the flames followed the smoke, and the ship was on fire. The purser's steward had done the thing. It came up the main hatchway in one line of light, flying up aloft, catching every rope, and in a moment the whole ship from hull to trucks was in a blaze. There was the devil to pay, and, for once, plenty of pitch hot, as you may suppose. The men abaft, frightened by the sudden blaze, endeavoured to lower the quarter-boats ; but, before they could do this, the deck became so hot that they took the shortest way of leaving the ship, by jumping overboard. I was all 'no how;' I did not know what to do. The panic had spread for'ard, and those who preferred a dry berth to a swim crowded on the forecastle, and got ready to lower themselves into the boats of the Badger, which put off immediately the accident was perceived. Nelson himself was in one, as cool as if we had no sun or fire to warm

him : he picked up those who had thrown themselves overboard."

"I see it all now!" said I; "I remember it as well as yesterday's grub: bear a hand and come to the clinch, Tom. We picked up the floaters, and the sharks got no dinner. Go on, Tom: why, you're as long as a seventy-four in stays."

"Well," continued Tom, "it was *sove ki poo*, as the Crapauds say, and each man endeavoured to save some of his traps as well as himself. I made a dive below in hopes of getting near the mess-chest; but the smoke was so thick, that I came up crying as if the cooper had knocked off my eyelids. I was just in time to avoid being roasted; for now the fire had rushed for'ard, and the flames run up both sides of the fore-rigging, and there was a general jump overboard; it was like so many rockets going up together, and the whole for'ard was in a blaze, whilst the melted pitch came dropping down like a shower of boiling rain. I had got upon the starboard cat-head, making ready to part company with the ship, when I heard a scream aloft, and I saw my brother on the topmost cross-trees, standing against the mast, and clinging close to it to avoid the fire; — he had lost his mind, and I was so frightened I could not assist him. Several in the boats —"

"I was one," I interrupted, "who called out to him not to mind a singe, but come down by the topmast-stay."

"And so did I," continued Tom. "I saw the poor boy, my own brother, his mother's favourite, clinging like a cat to the masts to avoid the flames. I made a rush at the fore-rigging, but the boiling pitch prevented my running up; every moment made it worse; nothing could save him, unless God's mercy should prompt him to run out to the top-gallant yard-arm and jump overboard. 'Here, here!' said I, spreading out my arms, — 'here, Bill, jump down and I'll catch you, — scud out to the yard-arm and jump over-board.' The fire had already caught his clothes; he had no jacket on — I see him now," said my old friend, — "I see him, with his long hair blown about by the breeze, his face pale with fear, the fire just burning his

trowsers, — I see him now endeavouring with his hands to stop the mounting of the flames ; and, oh, God ! I see him at this moment winding up his courage to the last pitch, looking down upon me ; and, as I live here, I saw a tear fall from his eye. I could not speak, I could not move ; I did not feel the hot boiling tar which showered down upon me ; I did not feel the heat which was almost melting me. I stood with my arms extended to catch him. ‘Jump, Bill,’ said I ; ‘the water is soft enough, never mind the height ; you will be up again before the sharks know you are down.’ And he did jump — ay, he jumped, by heavens ! like a man — he was down in a second. I tried to catch him, my hands stretched to their utmost : — I grazed his trowsers, and saw his brains shattered to atoms against the shank of the best bower-anchor. He fell overboard, and I was after him before he touched the water : he went to the bottom like a stone, and I was taken up by one of the boats, swimming in the water coloured by my brother’s blood.”

Here Tom stopped. The rough storms of life had not turned the natural current of affection ; and as I, with the sleeve of my coat, endeavoured to make objects more distinct, the whistle of the wind, as it howled through the rigging as the old ship surged to windward, was the only noise that broke the dead silence. “Starboard cat-head !” said the look-out man, as it struck five bells of the middle watch, and Tom jumped up to keep a sharp look-out to windward.

“Stop,” said I, “for a moment : it’s no use now, Tom, a-thinking of that which happened years ago, Bill is in heaven long before this. But only to think that you should have been a messmate of mine in this good old ship so long, and I never know that you were the man just sinking in that blood, when I managed to hook you on and haul you into the jolly-boat. Ay, you would all have been blown to a thousand smithereens, if it had not been for Nelson ; who, at the commencement, made some of your hands ‘throw the powder overboard, and point the guns upward.’* I remember it all : come, Tom, cheer up, and take a little of this stuff.”

* Southey.

"Give us your hand first," said Tom, "and let me look at the man who saved my life. I always liked you ; and when you shall be mowed down by death, as the parson says, I'll drop a tear over the grave of Brace of the Agamemnon."

"Much obliged to you, Tom, with all my heart," I replied ; "but I hope I may have to do as much for you. There is many a day for each of us to see before we start our anchors for Gravesend ; and so, my best wishes for your eyesight, Tom, and a good relief when your time is up. — Die !" said I to myself ; "but I'm blessed if I do just yet, if I can help it ; and as for life, I should like it to be as long as the old black fellow's at Jamaica, who drew his pension from his master's will more than one hundred years, and was called Old Glory at fifty when his master died."

It is not every man who has luck in this life, or I should be first lord of the Admiralty. But I have no reason to complain ; for when I left my home and got to Portsmouth, resolved to sail upon the seas, I shipped on board the *Raisonnable*, Captain Suckling, on the 20th of September, 1770, being then twelve years and two months old ; and from that day to this I never regretted being a fore-mast man, or was ever ashamed of my calling. Young Nelson was in this ship : it was his first trip, and it was not a long one — we never started our anchors : the squadron of which the *Raisonnable* formed a part had, in consequence of some disputes between England and Spain about the Falkland Islands, been fitted out, — but, as the proverb "One sword drawn keeps the other in the scabbard" was verified, the hostile preparations led to negotiations, and the question was settled without fighting. The *Raisonnable* was with the other ships paid off ; and I, who had somehow taken a fancy to the sickly boy — as the greatest naval hero in the world was once called — joined him in rather a wild freak, entered on board a merchantman, and, in the capacity of fore-mast lads, we made a voyage to the West Indies. We returned together, both the better as sailors for the hard work and the knowledge we had gained. A week in the fore-top will teach a willing scholar more seamanship in regard to splicing, knotting, reefing, and furling

than could be obtained by one year's conversation or observation from the quarter-deck: and I have heard Nelson say — and he knew the fore-tack from the captain's scraper — “Aft, the more honour; forward, the better man.”

It was on board this merchant-ship that I became attached to him. He was a thin spare boy when he returned, for the climate had taken the colour out of his face, and the situation did not please him. He was soon sick of merchant sailing, and so was I, for I had a spice of the devil in my composition; and when he said to me, “Let's leave this sugar-ship, and try the Navy again,” I did not refuse, I promise you. He was received as a midshipman on board the *Triumph*, and I entered as ship's boy: and there was I once more in the King's service, alongside of the lad I had made my friend; and although he was only a few months older than me, yet he was the officer and I the man.

This was in the year 1772. It did not suit us to remain doing nothing but looking out of the port-holes. Nelson was no idler, and I was all for the open waters. We never were king's hard bargains, — fellows with short hair and long teeth, who stick in a guard-ship, and wonder they don't make prize-money; not a bit of it: the *Triumph* was too still for us; and no sooner did he hear that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole, than he volunteered for a frost-bite, and was received on board the *Carcass* bomb-vessel, commanded by Captain Lutwidge, who was to sail in company with the *Racehorse*, under the orders of Captain the Honourable John Phipps, eldest son of Lord Mulgrave, and senior officer of the two ships.

There was the devil to pay about me, for no boys were allowed to enter for that service; Nelson himself was rated as coxswain, in order to blind the clerk of the check; and as I was only fourteen years of age, it required my being taken as captain's servant, or I might have been fishing out of the fore-chains of the *Triumph*, whilst my master was blowing the snow from off his nose in latitude $79^{\circ} 56' 39''$, and longitude $9^{\circ} 43' 30''$ east, where we were on the 6th of July, having sailed from the Nore on the 4th June. We had all kinds of contrivances on board; and

the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sandwich, came on board himself to see that we were well provided with every thing. I think I see him now, as he stood by the galley, watching the salt water turned into fresh by one Dr. Irving, who went out with us, and who managed, by shipping a tube to the ship's coppers, and dabbing it with a wet swab as the vapour passed, to get from thirty-four to forty gallons of fresh water every day out of the salt sea.

I remember, when I told this to Tom, that he exclaimed "Go it, my lad! I have seen islands jump up in a moment and go down the next, and know something of the Red Sea and flying fishes. Blow me, if ever I heard the like of that — getting fresh water out of a salt-water swab!"

"How should you, Tom," said I, "when you have never been to the North Pole?"

"No, that's true," replied Tom; "but *I have been round Cape Horn.*" *

Well, on the 30th July we were in lat. $80^{\circ} 13'$, and long. $18^{\circ} 48'$ east, among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships: there we were stuck fast, with nothing to do but go into the ice-fields and fill the casks with water. I did not believe one word of fields of ice until I saw them, for I was then as green as I thought they ought to have been.

The next day, we were regularly jammed up within two-lengths of each other, separated by the ice, which was no longer smooth like fields, but forced higher than the main-yard, rising up in all manner of odd shapes, and seeming very much inclined to crush us between two mountains. We then set to work to saw through pieces of ice twelve feet thick, in order to get the ships to the westward. This was cold work; and although we laboured hard, we never moved them more than three hundred yards, and we drifted, ice and all, just as much to the eastward.

The season was now far advanced; and Nelson, young as he was, was placed in command of a boat, and I pulled the bow-oar of it. We went to look for a passage to the westward, and got into an action, the like of which was

* The reader is perhaps not aware that this last expression is used by seamen who have the privilege of telling *wonderful* stories. — ENR.

never seen or heard. Whilst we were in a small pool of water, some officers in a boat belonging to the Racehorse wounded a walrus. Well, what does the animal do, but dives down and brings up a whole regiment of them, and they all began to attack the baot. One of the walruses twisted an oar out of one of the men's hands, and they then made a rush to upset the boat. At this moment we came up, and the animals, finding the reinforcement likely to overpower them, made a retreat by diving under the ice.

Ay, it makes me freeze when I think of it, how nearly we were losing young Nelson by his being eaten by a bear. It was a week after the walrus affair, when, during the night, Nelson called me, and said he was going after a bear; so we armed ourselves with ship's muskets, and away we went. It became very foggy, we were out of sight of the ship, and shortly afterwards could not see one another: I stopped to load my musket, and when it was done I could not see my companion. About four in the morning, the weather cleared, and I saw Nelson close aboard of a large bear. They twigged us from the ship, and up went a flag. I told him of it: he did not care a straw, but took aim at the bear. His gun missed fire, and mine would not go off; so there we were, close to the beast, only separated by a rent in the ice. "There's the signal," said I. "Never mind," said he; "only let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him."

He was saved the trouble, however, for Captain Lutwidge fired a shot at us, which startled the bear, and made us heave about and return to the ship. Well, after that, we found the ships hard and fast in the ice, and no chance of moving them an inch. We tried the boats, and we found the water clear to the westward; so the commodore kept sail upon both ships, and, by degrees, we got clear of the standing harbour;—but to be sure we paid for it. I remember one of the men taking up his own foot, which had fallen off from a frost-bite, and asking the surgeon what animal it belonged to; and another chap, who put his hand upon one of the guns, ran round and round the deck, calling out that it was red-hot and had burnt him.

I have been in hot and cold climates : one is always wet and dry in one, and that is not so uncomfortable either ; whilst in the other, you are blowing fingers from morning to night, and require as many wrappers as a mummy, to keep soul and body together. Some people say a cold climate is the best, because you *may* get warm, whilst in a hot one you can't get cool. These men never felt the first of the land-breeze in the latter case, or sailed with Captain Phipps in the North Seas for the former. Let Jack Frost only take hold of either the nose or the hand, and you may rub until doomsday, and then, I fancy, you will not be very warm. How can a man be comfortable in a country where no insect can live, and where the heavens are frozen as well as the sea — where thunder is never heard, nor lightning seen ? — at least I know it was so in 81° north.

We got clear of it at last, — I mean the ice ; and right glad I was when we left the ship, and our recollections began to thaw : mine's been right ever since. We left the Carcass — I never liked her on account of the name — and joined the Sea-horse, Captain Farmer.

CHAPTER II.

"A brush with Mounseer is better any day than a brush with Yellow Jack."
— *Old Saying.*

It is not every man who mounts a ladder without a slip backwards, and this was the case with Nelson. He had been an officer, now he came back to the seaman ; for we were foretopmen together ; he was in the starboard, and I in the other watch, so we always knew what was going on. To get the chill out of us, we went out to India : Sir Edward Hughes commanded the squadron. It was owing to old Soundings, the master, afterwards Captain Surridge, a regular good sailor, who kept his hawk's eye upon all

skulkers, and who knew a good man from the way he held his head, that young Nelson was rated a midshipman. He was then a stout florid-looking young man, but he soon melted away in India; and when we had been out about eighteen months, he fell sick, and was very near slipping his wind, for he could not move hand or foot, and was just like a skeleton in sheets.

I often got to talk to him, and I took it so much to heart, that I fell sick myself. They thought it all up with us, and the purser offered to write home to my mother, and took her direction; but, thank God! we were both brought home safe and sound, by Captain Pigot in the Dolphin.

In that ship we had plenty of the right sort, and amongst them was Sir Charles Pole, and that gallant fellow Sir Thomas Trowbridge: they were all midshipmen together, and all full of life and hope but Nelson and myself. I got well; but when I saw my old shipmate and companion drooping, I never thought to see him in command of the Victory. He used to despond very much; he thought he had neither strength nor health to follow the sea, and was melancholy and down-hearted.

The Dolphin was paid off, and he was appointed acting lieutenant in the Worcester sixty-four, then commanded by Captain Mark Robinson, that gallant officer who saw and shared in the actions of Sir Peter Warren and Lord Hawke. When Captain Robinson commanded the Falcon at the attack on Guadaloupe, his ship sunk under him; and afterwards, in 1778, he led the British fleet, when he commanded the Shrewsbury, five times into action. He lost his leg on the 5th September, 1781, in Admiral Graves's affair off the Chesapeake, and died, Lord bless him! a superannuated rear-admiral in 1798. It's odd how a man breaks off a yarn when a hero comes athwart him, and we sailors never go straight an end with our histories.

I got into the Worcester, for Nelson gave me a character as an active seaman, and one who did not care any more for heat and cold than a toad. We did not do much in that ship, because no opportunity offered; but when we

came back, Nelson passed his examination, and the next day they made him second lieutenant of the *Lowestoffe* frigate, commanded by Captain William Locker ; and away he went, and I on board, and always a foretopman, to the West Indies again. — I'll just tell you a short yarn about Nelson, to show you what a spirited fellow he was even in those days. We had a nice chase after an American letter of marque ; it was blowing so hard that one of the main-topmen, who was going up the lee rigging, was blown straight out like a pennant, and, if he had not held on with his eyelids, he would have been carried away like a feather. The sea was rolling mountains high, and we never met one lower than Greenwich-hill.

"Take the cutter," says the captain to the first lieutenant, "and board that vessel."

"Ay, ay, sir," he answered, and dived below like a widgeon to fish up his dirk ; he was a long time finding it, however ; when who should come on deck but the captain, who had been below with the master with the charts ; he saw the boat along-side, very likely to be staved to atoms. 'Hulloa !' said he. I was in the boat keeping her off with the stretchers, and shoving her clear off the lee main-yard arm, which was rolling in the water.

The captain looks squally-like, as he says, "Have I got no officer on board my ship who can take possession of the prize ?"

"Yes, sir," said the master, "I'm the man who will do it."

"I beg your pardon," says *Lieutenant Nelson*, "it's my turn first ; and if I come back without securing her, why then it's your turn."

We had a tough job of it ; and one sea, for the vessel was water-logged, nearly washed us right over as high as the main-top.

When I told this yarn to Tom — for we were always a-spinning them one to the other — says Tom, "What year was that in ?" — "Why, in 1779," said I. "Ah !" said he, "I went higher in the air than you that year and lower in the water." And this is the way he told his story.

"I'll just take the liberty," he began, "of telling you

about one Captain Farmer. I'm not the man to let such a gallant fellow as that be neglected ; for though we may now have more finished officers on board our ships, yet we can't have braver, more loyal, or more excellent seamen than we had fifty years back. You may make the uniform more tidy, and you may make them know more about stars, and the sun and the moon ; but you cannot place better hearts in their bodies than our old ones had, dress them how you will. This I'm quite certain of, that ever since the seamen docked their tails, and invited one mess to drink tea with the other, your old Jack is gone to the devil ; and all I hope is, that the hyson mundungo ships' companies will do as well as we did. '

" It was on the 6th of October, 1779, when Captain Farmer commanded the Quebec, of thirty-two guns, that we saw a large ship to leeward, we being off Ushant. We bore up, and as she was within two gun-shots when we first observed her at daylight, we were soon, in spite of her endeavour to escape, alongside of her, and commenced action with the Surveillante, of forty-guns. At ten o'clock A. M. we poured in our first broadside ; it went rattling into her in great style, and we made sure of our prize ; but she gave us a smart return, and there were plenty of petitioners for Greenwich. Well, it was give and take, like two good ones, for three hours and a half, during which time our brave captain was severely wounded. Away went the Frenchman's foremast, and we gave three good cheers ; but before we could finish the huzzas, our mizen-mast had fallen, and the main-mast was badly wounded. ' Don't make game of the foolish,' said Bill Jones, ' you might be struck comical yourself ; ' and sure enough away went the main-mast over the side, and the topsail and course was right in the way of our firing. Before one o'clock the Frenchman had not a stick standing, and we were just in the same state. Our enemy's guns were heavier than ours, and he had more of them, and more men to work them.

" We did not have all this fun to ourselves ; for the Rambler, a little cutter, commanded by one Lieutenant George, was touching up a French cutter to leeward of us,

and their little popguns came in between our great guns and musketry. 'Huzza, my boys!' said Captain Farmer, 'now at it again; never say *die* while there's a shot in the locker.' Well, we were doing it properly, when all of a sudden the sails caught fire from our firing through them, and we were soon in a blaze. I thought I was born to be burnt alive, for I never could steer clear of a fire: other ships have sailed round the world and not been burnt, or fought all through the Nile without catching fire; but every blessed ship I get into, somehow or other, pays a compliment to old Nick and lights up a blaze. — The firemen were all alive with their buckets; and I, who had seen quite enough of ship-burning in Montego Bay, in the beginning of the year, did not go to sleep on this occasion.

"But it was no use; we lost ground, and the Frenchman did not leave us alone during this misfortune. She was dismasted like ourselves; and she could make but little of the advantage of not being on fire, for she rolled about heavily, so that most of her shots were harmless. There was some talk of removing Captain Farmer, who was dreadfully wounded, to the Rambler, which cutter was a long way to leeward; but although he could be of no service — for the ship was now in flames beyond all power of being extinguished — yet he swore he would never strike his colours, or leave his brave companions. This gave us a little life; for nothing shakes the courage of sailors more than the doubts of their officer; and every man fore and aft knows it as well as I do, that if a captain winks, half the crew shut their eyes. We tried all that men could do to put out the fire, but it increased rapidly. The wind in the mean time had lulled from the firing; and there was the Quebec a complete wreck and burning away like smoke and oakum. We had been fighting from ten till half-past one, and hard at work ever since, in endeavouring to quench the flames; we had stuck our colours on an ensign-staff, and there we remained without being meddled with by the enemy, for she hardly struck us once, until six o'clock in the evening, when the magazine caught fire, and we blew up — I don't know how high I went, but I think I must have been very near the stars, for I saw them a-twinkling ——"

"Hurrah, Tom!" said I.

"When down I comes souse in the sea, and began to strike out, after I had nearly paid a visit to the bottom; for I came down head foremost, and must have been like an iceberg, twice as far under water as I had been above it. I was picked up by the Rambler's boat, and then I found that the captain, most of the officers, and nearly all the crew, had perished.

"I never shall forget when I got on board the cutter. I ran down in the fore peak, and I'm blessed if I did not kneel down and say my prayers. I was afraid to open my eyes, for fear I should find myself close to the moon, with only slippery fingers to hold on with. Well, Captain Farmer was a right brave one, for just before we blew up, and when the first lieutenant went to him and touched his hat, just as coolly as if he was reporting the men all clean at divisions, and said, 'The fire, sir, has reached the magazine door;' the captain looked up at the colours, and then giving a kind of frown of defiance at the *Surveillante*, said, 'I would rather go there (pointing aloft), with the colours flying, than tow into Brest harbour astern of any Frenchman.'

"Away he went a moment after. He lost his life, the country a brave man, the navy a good officer, and here am I, Tom Toprail, to tell the story, who was so highly elevated, and yet never promoted."

Poor Tom always swore when, in after life, his tail grew rather grey, that it was owing to this dive; and he used to say, "that the tow-rope of his head had got as white as a hawser under water."

I had heard something of Captain Farmer before; for do you mind, whenever a man is a good one in the Navy, we are sure to hear of it; and when he is a bad one, why, we are always like the Jews after payment, blessed with very bad memories.

But to return to my own story. After boarding the American letter of marque, Nelson applied to the captain for the command of our tender, and I was one of the crew. He used to cruize keenly, but we never made any prize-money; and he got sick of the tender, and was removed

by Sir Peter Parker (another good name, and one which has been bravely and nobly upheld by all who have had the wearing of it) — into the Bristol, the admiral's flagship; and towards the end of the year 1778, he was made commander into the Badger, and was down on the Honduras shore, looking after American privateers.

On the 11th June, 1779, I drank a good stiff out-and-outer, to the success of Captain Nelson, that day posted into the Hinchinbrook of twenty-eight guns, which had been an enemy's merchant-ship, sheathed with wood, and taken into our service. The gallant Collingwood was made commander into the Badger; and Nelson, not yet one-and-twenty years of age, had gained that rank which placed him within reach of all the honours the service can offer.

About this time, Count D'Estaing, with a fleet of one hundred and twenty-five sail, men-of-war, and transports, having on board, they said, twenty-five thousand men, threatened to make an attack on Jamaica. General Dalling was the soldier who commanded in that island; and Nelson and his coxswain — that was myself — took command of the fort at Port Royal.

But it all came to moonshine; we never got them within range, and our seven thousand men, all we could muster on the island, had the satisfaction of being under arms night and day for nothing at all. General Dalling, however, was determined he would have some fighting, he was not particular where; so he set to work in a scheme against the Spanish colonies. I have since heard that it was to take Fort San Juan, on the river of that name, which flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Grenada and Leon; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern possessions in America. This was all very fine to talk about, but we knew very little about the climate. The difficulties which occurred in fitting us out for the breeze delayed the expedition until we got into the sickly season, and we had to fight against that more than against the enemy.

In January, 1780, we embarked on board of the Hinch-

inbrook and some transports, five hundred men, which we conveyed to Cape Gracias à Dios, in Honduras. When we got there we might have believed that a general desertion had taken place amongst the inhabitants, for we could not find a native to sell us a cocoa-nut; these fellows having been told that we came to make slaves of them and sell them at Jamaica. But we soon got over this difficulty, for one of the natives having come down upon us, we gave him such fine presents, that he shortly brought others, and those who had been our greatest enemies soon became our best friends. The naval department was under the command of my captain; and the soldiers had for a leader as brave a man as ever walked on land, one Major Polson. They had a very uncomfortable berth of it in their tents, which they fixed in a swampy and unwholesome plain: in the day they were grilled, and in the evening they were eaten; for the mosquitoes — you know Honduras is on the Mosquitoe shore — came buzzing and biting by millions at a time; and the sand-flies took their share of the good things thus providentially provided for them by General Dalling. These voracious devils had one month's good food; after which, we proceeded along the shore to collect our friends amongst the natives; they were to find us boats, and to lend us a hand in the attack.

We reached the river San Juan on the 24th of March, perfectly under the guidance of the Indians, for not a man of our party had ever been up the river. Here Nelson was to have given up the command; but he was not the man to do that, for he knew that the service was hazardous, and that something desperate would be attempted: so he forgot his orders, and gave others for the embarkation of the troops, two hundred of which he placed on board the Mosquitoe craft and in two of our boats, and away we started. But, as I said before, the great people at Jamaica forgot that we should arrive at the dry season; and we had hard work to force the boats over the shallows, and thus proceed up this narrowed and now low river. At last, after several days' work, the hardest and the hottest I remember, we got into deep water, and then had to contend against rapids and currents. If it had not been for

the Indians, we might have turned back without doing any thing, for we never should have found our way ; as it was, those curious chaps and ourselves did all the work, and the soldiers had enough to do to keep quiet and cool. It was the most infernal hot expedition I ever was engaged in.

On the 9th of April we reached San Bartolomeo, an island which the Spaniards had fortified ; and although the battery itself was a little semicircular affair, mounting only nine or twelve swivels, and manned with only eighteen men, yet it was so placed as to command the most rapid and difficult part of the river. The battery gave us a warm reception : and Nelson, in jumping out of the boat into the mud, was nearly sticking there altogether, but extricated himself with only the loss of his shoes. He was followed by that unfortunate man Despard, who was a captain in the army ; and his coxswain, I hope, was not much behindhand. We made a dash at the battery and boarded it ; away jumped the Spaniards, and we gave them a parting salute with their own guns. This was child's play ; for when a man gets a crack from a shot, why it's what he expects, and that's all in the regular service line : but, Lord bless you ! what's a grape-shot to the yellow-fever ?

The castle of San Juan was only sixteen miles above this battery on the island. When we got within a few miles of it, we landed the soldiers and the stores, and marched on through a forest so thick that I really think got an inch thinner by jamming myself between the trees, and we could not open our eyes for snakes, which carted at us from the boughs. I dare say there's many a man who does not believe this ; but I tell you the truth, that one of the men was bitten just under the eye by one of those little devils, and could not proceed for the pain ; and that when some of us, who missed him not five minutes afterwards, went back to look after him, we found him not only dead, but putrid. Ay ! I saw him myself putrid in five minutes ; and now that I'm writing my life, it is not worth my while at my age to be telling lies like a play-actor, who calls himself a king by candle-light. I

remember that one day Nelson was very much fatigued and ordered his hammock, which was his only bed, to be hung up between two trees, and in he turned and was soon asleep—for I often wondered how he kept awake. The Indians were about the hammock, when one saw a particular kind of lizard pass over his face. The Indian awoke him directly, and told him to get out; and there was one of the most venomous serpents of the country rolled up at his feet. Travellers, I know, are said to see strange things, and old sailors are told that they spin galley-yarns; but it's just as true as that we are here. These lizards are called monitory lizards, because they warn people that the serpent is too close to be pleasant. After this, we nearly lost our captain by his drinking some water into which a branch of manchineel had been thrown; and he never got the better of this until his death.

The second day after our taking the first fort, we came in sight of the castle of San Juan, and Nelson proposed immediately to assault it; but he was overruled, and we began a regular siege. We were ten days before we commenced scientific operations, and just then the rains began. Never was there a scene more dreadful to behold; even the Indians could not stand it—they died like dogs. We had begun on the 11th, and on the 24th the place surrendered. We now thought our labours at an end, and fancied that once in possession of the fort, we had only to sit down and recover our fatigues; but we were soon made sensible of our mistake. There was nothing in the place which could contribute to the recovery of the sick, or to save those who were hovering round the graves of their companions, and in danger every moment of catching the infection. The hides of the dead cattle, now putrid, nearly killed us with the stench; and when it was resolved to build an hospital near the castle, our men were so beaten by fatigue and sickness that we could not muster any hands to work at it. We had not men enough well to attend upon the sick, and the garrison duty was done by those in such a state that even a squall of wind would have blown them away.

The river had swollen with the rain, and the rapids had

become dangerous. We might have got down to the coast for the medicine chest, rather too quickly to be safe, but we never could have got back again — it would have been impossible to stem the stream, so we were obliged to look at Death in the face without being able to offer him any resistance. He was now making desperate havoc amongst us ; the living were unable to bury the dead. We launched our best friends, of whom we were so suddenly deprived, from the walls of the castle ; and as each floated away, hundreds of greedy gallinazos fixed upon the floating carcass, digging their ravenous beaks into the corpse, and straining their necks to tear our comrade to pieces. When satiated with their meal, they lazily returned to the fort, and, perched upon the trees which surrounded it, watched us with horrid gluttony, as if exulting in our weakness, and knowing that we were about to become their food.

Five long months did this continue ; five months, day after day, did we who could walk, pace amongst the birds who had eaten our companions, afraid to kill them — for they were our best scavengers, and trembling as we looked at them — for they were destined to devour those who died. We then abandoned the place, leaving only a few men, who seemed proof against the climate, to hold the fort until the Spaniards felt inclined to retake it : the rest retreated from the castle ; and out of eighteen hundred men who had contributed to conquer this wretched charnel-house, only three hundred and eighty ever returned. Of our complement on board the Hinchinbrook of two hundred men, eighty-seven were struck with sickness in one night, and out of the whole crew only ten survived. It was a scene of cruel desolation : the ships which brought the troops sunk in the harbour, their crews being all dead : and the worms ate through them until they went down from the leaks thus occasioned. We wanted not those vessels, however, for the men they brought had perished ; and brave and gallant hearts, which would never have flinched from Death when fairly faced to him in the field, trembled when he threw the pall of sickness over them, and crushed them to the

earth, to become the prey of birds or the food of savage animals.

Nelson had escaped this by a timely retreat. When the siege was commenced he was attacked with dysentery : he returned to the harbour the day before the fort surrendered ; thence to Port Royal, so sick that he was carried on shore in his cot ; and although, on being appointed to the *Janus*, forty-four guns, he removed to that ship (having succeeded Captain Glover who died), yet was his health so injured, and his frame so shattered, that he was obliged to ask leave to return to England. He took his passage in the *Lion*, Captain (afterwards Admiral) Cornwallis, to whose care and kindness he was indebted for his life. Four months after his return, when he was appointed to the *Albemarle*, I joined him again, having lived to reach Old England more like a skeleton than a man.

CHAPTER III.

Four French sail, in show so stout,
 Bore down on the *Arethusa*.
 The fam'd *Belle Poule* straight a-head did lie,
 The *Arethusa* scorn'd to fly —
 Not a sheet, nor a tack,
 Nor a brace, did she slack ;
 Though the Frenchmen laugh'd, and thought it stuff,
 They knew not the handful of men how tough
 On board of the *Arethusa*.

Sea Song.

I HAVE heard our doctor, a clever man from the north of the Tweed, say that the human body is nearly at the same heat either amongst the ice at the North Pole, or under the Equator near the coast of Africa ; and he remarked (for I have a good memory, as you 'll find out as we get along) that if a thermometer was placed in a man's mouth at the North Pole, and another in a man's mouth at the Equator, the heat would be the same. I dare say this is all true enough with philosophers, but I don't think it is quite gospel in regard to seamen. The Admiralty, how-

ever, were of the philosopher's opinion ; for when Nelson was appointed to the Albemarle in 1782, and I went on board as coxswain, although I was only twenty-two years of age, we found that the great lords in London believed in this equal heat, and concluded, that as we had been baked in Honduras, we might as well cool the loaf in the Baltic. Therefore, before we were what you might call men again, we were ordered to the North Sea, and kept there during the whole winter. If a stranger had seen Nelson when the order arrived for our sailing, he would not have believed him to be the quiet man he generally was. He could not stand this cruel order without a murmur ; and it stuck by him all his life. Now it's very seldom that I ever dared in my dreams to differ from Nelson, but I think it was foolish of him to complain of that which he could not remedy ; and I say, that if a man's health is not good enough for him to go any where that he is ordered, why he had better hang up his fiddle and be off on shore.

Some good is always to be got by sickness : either a man becomes a better man, or he teaches himself the employment of time, and soon gets tired of looking out of a window wondering what the rest of the world are at. When I got a little about, I fell a little in love ; and I soon found out that a man who could neither write nor read would make a very bad correspondent. So, with a good will, I set to work, and, before a year had passed, I wrote as nice and as clear a hand as the ship's clerk ; so that I was soon found very useful, and afterwards became the copying-clerk of the great captain. We were in the North Sea during the time of the armed neutrality, and therefore we could do nothing in the way of service. She was an overmastered ship that Albemarle, and we were every now and then in danger of turning the turtle.

At last we got safe enough back to the Downs, and there we anchored. I had taken the captain on shore at Deal in the barge, and he gave me leave to stay. The boat was sent off, and I began to cruise about that town of smugglers ; when all of a sudden a squall of wind came on, and immediately afterwards a slight sprinkling of rain by way of

feeding it. In two hours' time it was blowing as hard as it blew the other day at Barbadoes, when it threw the church down. I found myself standing on the beach, looking at the pock-marked boatmen, who all get those holes in their faces by their mothers amusing themselves in rolling their children over the shingle. There I found my captain holding both his hands to shelter his eyes as he kept them steadily fixed upon the ship. A store-ship was anchored just a-head of us, and the captain saw that she was dragging her anchors, and that she would drift athwart hawse of the Albemarle. Nelson, fearing that both ships would drift on the Goodwin Sands, roared out to the Deal-men to launch a boat and take him on board ; but being mostly married men with large families, they were by no means inclined to risk their own lives when they did not consider that any body else's was in danger : they are the men, however, when real danger stares at them, who launch through a surf that would almost blind a man to look at.

On this occasion the Deal-men thought it impossible to get on board, the gale was so uncommonly high. In vain did Nelson point out his fears in regard to his ship ; they would not budge an inch ; until at last, after they had held a consultation, they agreed to try for fifteen guineas. Into the boat we jumped ; and, to the astonishment and fear of all present, we embarked during the height of the tempest. Bravely did the men cling to their oars, and in spite of all difficulties we reached the ship. The store-ship had drifted clear of the Albemarle, but had left her without either foremast or bowsprit. I never saw Nelson greater than he was at this moment ; for, although suffering from sickness, he cheered on the boatmen to their greatest exertions, disregarding his personal safety, and only anxious to assist by his best endeavours to save the ship which had been committed to his charge.

Away we went to Canada after this, and there I saw a little piece of gratitude in an old man. Gratitude, generally speaking, is like a man getting three dozen at the gangway. It's always, "Hit me higher, dear boatswain's mate" — then comes another lash, and it's, "Ho ! hit me lower, boatswain's mate : " and faith, it's odd enough, but the man

getting flogged is never grateful, hit him where you will — he always gets it when and where he least wants it. But in this case it was otherwise. We took a fishing schooner, the vessel and cargo being the only property of her skipper, who had a large family. Nelson made him a pilot, and afterwards restored his vessel and cargo to him. Well, when most of our crew were on the sick list, this man, at the hazard of his life, came off to us with a present of sheep, poultry, and other fresh provisions — that's what I call gratitude; for he might have lived for ever out of sight of us both as to house and to memory. At Boston they keep the certificate Nelson gave the old man; and it will remain as a memorial of his generosity for ever.

Some of your over-scrupulous gentlemen say, that when nations are at war, no one man has a right to return an enemy a vessel; and strictly speaking, perhaps, this is the truth. But Nelson was not the man to render poorer a man already poor; and he possessed that good and generous heart which did not make war against old fishermen. Frenchmen, however, are not so nice; for in 1796, on the 4th of September, Admiral Richery amused himself in the Bay of Bulls by plundering and setting fire to the huts of the poor fishermen, and was not contented with destroying their vessels, but he actually broke up their fishing-stages: and that's the difference of feeling between Monsieur Richery and Horatio Nelson.

It was not long after this, that we were cruising off Boston, watching a squadron of Frenchmen. We had been dogging about that harbour for some time, always keeping pretty close in, and never letting the enemy out of our sight; when one day, as we were hove to about six miles from the shore, we were roused up by the boatswain piping "All hands make sail." I jumped on deck to the wheel, and there I found the captain, looking as calm and contented as if we were not sure of being prisoners. Four line-of-battle ships and one frigate had come out of the harbour with a fresh breeze, which hardly reached us, and which gave us the opportunity of ascertaining our inferiority in point of sailing. We were soon under all the canvass we could crowd; and right a-stern of us, and nearly within

shot, was the French squadron. They overhauled us fast, the frigate taking the lead, and coming on like a bully who knows he's backed.

"I wish I had you quietly to myself," said Nelson, as he looked at her through the glass, "and I think you would soon steer another course."

It was a seventy-four with six months' stores on board to the value of a bumboat, that we did not see England again before we saw a prison; some of us, indeed, began to talk about packing up our silver in the waistbands of our trowsers. Nelson was the only man who seemed quite collected; for, if the breeze lasted, it was evident that he himself could not fight four liners and a frigate, and we should have been beaten beforehand.

"Keep the hands on deck," said he to the first lieutenant, "and haul up three points to the westward."

Now this looked like a finish, because the enemy were enabled to keep outside of us, and we were steering right for the St. George's Bank; a place surrounded by shoals and shallows, and about as intricate to navigate as the entrance to the Colchester river. Well, smack at them we steered; it was hard-a-starboard one moment, and port you may the next; square away the yards here, and brace up the yards there; and we turned in and out of the shoals, doubling every moment like a hare pursued. The large ships hauled off; but the frigate continued the pursuit, and her captain seemed as good a pilot as Nelson, who now appeared very anxious to sail a little slower than we did.

"Beat to quarters!" said the little man, his eye all on fire, "and now we are in the open water again, shorten sail and heave to."

No sooner did our chase a-stern observe this, than he refused the invitation, shortened sail, and beat back again. "Fire an unshot gun," said Nelson, "and let that blustering Frenchman make the best of the insult;" and he did make the best of it, for he never resented it.

It was about this time that I perceived a great change come over the future Hero of the Ocean. He would walk the deck in an absent manner; would frequently talk to himself; and his eye, which, when he looked at the enemy,

seemed hot enough to melt him, was now languid, and had a kind of odd appearance, as if his mind was all abroad. He never used to walk the full length of the quarter-deck; his step was hurried, and he turned as short as if he had only a fisherman's walk — one step and overboard. I soon found out the reason, — *he was in love*. I now learned the truth of what I afterwards read, that “heroes in war are men, alas! in love.”

We were in Quebec, when the orders came for us to convoy a fleet of transports to New York. It was in the month of October, 1782, and the winter was so far advanced that our sails were frozen to the yards. This, you would fancy, would take the love out of any man; but no, Nelson was in for it; his heart had been moved by the soft warblings of a woman, and when he took leave of her, he became very queer, and when he came on board, he looked at the ship as if he did not like her. The next morning he went ashore again, and who should he meet on the beach but Mr. Davison. “Hulloa, Nelson,” said he, “what brings you on shore?”

“I can’t leave Quebec,” said Nelson, “without seeing the woman whose society has contributed so much to my happiness, and to whom I intend to offer my hand.”

“If you do,” said Mr. Davison, “your ruin must inevitably follow.”

“Then let it follow,” said Nelson, “for I am resolved to do it.”

“And I,” replied Davison, “am resolved that you shall not.” Before my captain could recover his astonishment, for he was not a man to be contradicted, Mr. Davison handed him to his boat, wished him good-b’ye, and in a few days we were off Sandy Hook, where we found the commander-in-chief, Admiral Digby, and Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney’s victorious fleet.

When Nelson returned on board from his official visit to the Admiral, he rubbed his hands with delight, and told the first lieutenant that the Albemarle was to be attached to Lord Hood’s squadron, and go to the West Indies. Well, there we were again; and who do you think we found there? why, his present Majesty the King*, God bless

him ! He was Duke of Clarence then, and commanded a frigate. Lord Hood took Nelson to him, and said on the quarter-deck to the Prince, " Sir, if your Royal Highness wishes to ask any questions respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson can give you as much information as any officer in the fleet."

Well, it was a proud thing to be under the orders of such a man. There was Nelson (as the King describes him) " the merest boy of a captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full-laced uniform, and old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length ;" making altogether about as odd a looking hero as ever man put eyes upon. But when he began to speak, especially on nautical matters, he was as wide awake as any man I ever knew.

Idleness will make the devil himself fall in love ; but the man that is always occupied seldom gets into that scrape. Did any body ever hear of a sailor, who had a good sharp first lieutenant (one of those hundred-eyed chaps that never allow a man time to say his prayers) falling in love ? A fellow, when he is perched up on the top-mast-head during a cruise, may rub up his affections, and sing to himself (for woe betide him if the first lieutenant hears him !) some old gammon about eyes and sighs, and doves and loves ; but if he happens to look back upon the past, and not look a-head or on both bows, and they see a sail from the deck before it's seen from the mast-head, why, instead of his heart being tickled by his love, his back will get scratched by the boatswain's mate. It's just so when you have got into the scrape : only screw up your mind to activity, only get some occupation, which must employ your time, and then, as the old song says,

" Love may go, with a sigh and a die,
To Jericho."

So it was with Nelson : no sooner did he get to sea, than his ship became his wife : he was anxious that she should be smarter and prettier than the others ; he watched the discipline ; his mind recovered itself, and when he got on board of her, he quite forgot his love ; although I dare

say a man with heart like his never forgot the kindness he had received ; — even the heat of the West Indies did not destroy it.

At this time it was believed that the French would attempt some of the passages between the Bahamas ; but their fleet got into Puerto Cabello, that same harbour from which the gallant Hamilton cut out the Spanish frigate — a deed which the naval history of the world cannot surpass, and which has rarely, if ever, been rivalled ; an affair so romantic, that few would credit the circumstance, if the frigate had not been our own before, and known as such after the capture, — I mean the *Hermione*. To be sure, Lord Cochrane did something like it at Callao. But let me not be rubbing up all the great actions of our countrymen, or I shall never get on.

In 1783, when the peace was proclaimed, the *Albemarle* was ordered home and paid off, and I gave yellow Jack the slip again, although it left my face rather of the mahogany colour — something like a boiled ham, as the landlord says ; and I don't think I ever quite recovered the mosquito bites and the jiggers. I got a berth on shore as captain's steward, and it won my heart to see how Nelson bothered the *Jacks-in-office* to pay the wages of the *Jacks* discharged. He was at it every day but one, and that day he went to court. After much harassing, all his men were paid what was due to them from other ships. Every man of them volunteered to follow him, should he obtain another command ; and there was not a real good seaman in the ship who did not envy me my good fortune in being always near him.

We sometimes hear, that your great dukes have hundreds of thousands of pounds ; and I never could understand where they keep it, and how it is that it never grows less. Well, I think a hundred and fifty pounds a great deal of money, but my captain did not. He used to growl about poverty, and the impossibility of living upon half-pay ; and by degrees he got less and less disposed to remain in England, and consequently went abroad to a place they call St. Omer, with Captain Macnamara, and there he had his proportion of love and grief.

CHAPTER IV

And now arrived the jovial night,
 When every true-bred tar carouses,
 When o'er the grog all hands delight
 To toast their sweethearts and their spouses.
 DIBDIK.

A soldier and a sailor
 Had once a doubtful strife, Sir,
 To make a maid a wife, Sir,
 Whose name was bluxom Joan.
Love for Love.

THIS is Saturday night, and we who have buffeted the ocean — (ay, even when the gale was highest, and the danger greatest) — always on this night drink to our sweethearts and wives. This whiles away the time, whilst the ship, staggering under her close-reefed main-topsail and fore-stay-sail, rolls over the seas threatening to overwhelm her, or rises like a duck as the watery mountain seems inclined to founder her. So it has ever been with sailors since the days of Benbow: Saturday night is with them a precious time; and for my part, although I never have had my foot on board a man-of-war for these last thirty years, I have never forgotten our customs.

How often do I look back through the long distance of fifty years, and think of the sky-larking and love-making which used to go on whenever the liberty-men went on shore, or when eighty or a hundred women came alongside of the ship at Portsmouth — those were the days! Lord, I think I see us now sitting upon the combings of the hatch-ways, with our tails hanging down in the cable-tiers; whilst old Tom Toprail, whose voice was as husky as if he had swallowed a top-chain, used to give us the following stave: —

Oh Saturday night — Oh Saturday night,
 With a glass of stiff grog, is the sailor's delight:
 We've done with the work of the day and the week,
 With no holes to stop up from a shot or a leak —
 He's a true merry dog
 Who can swallow his grog,
 And have a good quid to stick into his cheek.

When our hearts get a lift and our love gets adrift,
 Why we sigh when from Portsmouth to India we shift ;
 But we laugh when the topsails and courses are set —
 And old Moses may whistle for every debt
 When the freshening breeze
 Drives us over the seas,
 And our loves, and the Jews, and the bills — we forget.

If we happen to meet with an enemy's fleet,
 We give them three cheers and to quarters we beat ;
 We soon see the colours of *Munser* come down,
 Whilst the flag of Old England in triumph is shown.
 Then to Portsmouth we steer
 With our prize pretty near,
 And have girls and the grog, our exertions to crown.

Oh Saturday night — Oh Saturday night,
 When the work is all done, is the seaman's delight ;
 When the gale and the spray may fly over the head,
 And nought but the close-reefed main-topsail is spread ;
 When in chorus we sing
 For our Country and King —
 Three cheers for the Captain, and now, lads, to bed.

'Then down below old Tom used to dive at the end of the last verse, and rolling himself up in his hammock like a hedgehog, make as much noise with his nose as a grampus at play.

Ah ! it's a long time ago since I fell in love, and many a bitter moment it cost me afterwards. The man who wrote the songs said, "that a sailor found a wife in every port ;" in some respects I believe it's pretty true ; but it wasn't so with me.

We are curious chaps, we sailors, in regard to marriages, and many's the one I have seen. When your great lords and gentlemen get spliced, they make signals from the hats of their servants, so that all the world may know of the event. We do something like that ; for if a fore-top man gets spliced, we hang some ribbon from the topmast stay ; if a gunner, from the main stay ; and then we sit down and *stay* long enough over our grog to make us forget ourselves. So we only do at the beginning what others wish to do after they are spliced.

I remember old Tom telling me of his marriage ; but

I'm blessed if I don't think Tom had as many wives as the Grand Turk; and if the Turk got rid of them by sending them adrift on the sea, Tom went the other way to work, for he went adrift himself; and as he used to say, "he showed his colours and parted company." He told me the following yarn, when we were both of us old fellows, and I clap it in here out of its place, just because it pleases me.

"It was after the battle of Trafalgar," Tom began; "I had got my limbs according to the description book; and when the fleet arrived at Spithead, for I belonged to the Royal Sovereign, I had liberty to go on shore for three days.

"The girls were all for the sailors then. A soldier might have stumped about his regulation step, or stood upon one leg performing the goose-step, like a flamingo in South America, — he might have capered about the Point in his white breeches and leggins, his fine-weather tuffs and tails, until he danced the coat off his back, — before any one of the craft would have looked at him.

"Of course, when we got on shore, the first thing we did was to steer to the back of the Point, and make up the lee-way of our spirit-room. It is all right enough having an allowance on board ship, but it never does on shore. To tell a man not to get drunk, is like saying to a drowning man, 'Don't drink salt water.' There we were just as happy as lords; — we drank like fishes to the glory of the Victory; and as long as we could keep our mouths *above* water, we drank and cheered, and sang, until we began to dance to the penn'orth of tune old Catgut was pleased to pay.

"Well, we had lots of women in company; and amongst these was one Betsy Matson, a round, plump-looking rosy-faced girl, who had always a smile upon her face, and showed, when her little red lips were opened, as white a set of head-rails as any ship in the navy. Directly I saw her, I felt my heart somehow sicken; — it was just as unpleasant a feeling as the first cut of the cat. I nearly turned sick, and was struck all of a heap.

"'Ma'am' said I, 'will you dance a step with me?'

“ ‘Yes, surely,’ she answered, and up we stood for a step. I steered rather wild; for every now and then, as we were navigating in and out in the reel, I ran foul of my partner; she always smiled so good-naturedly, that, when we had finished, I thought it was all proper to show my fondness; so I just put my arm round her waist, and I gave her a kiss. In a moment after, however, a decent-looking chap of a soldier gave me another kind of slap. ‘Sailor,’ said he, ‘not so free till better acquainted. I love that young woman, and neither you nor any other man shall kiss her.’

“It was side out for a bend in a moment; and as it was only one sodger amongst about forty Trafalgar men, of course we gave him fair play. One or two of our lads stood by him. We ordered in a pot of porter for both of us; and as I passed Betsy, and saw her piping her eye, said she, ‘I love you both: I have known the young soldier these two years; but I am all for Trafalgar lads at my heart.’

“ ‘Well, ma’am,’ said I, ‘it’s a stand-up fight for a good prize. My hand is yours: I love you from the bottom of my heart, Betsy.’ So, hitching up my trowsers, I stretched out my legs, gave her a squint of the eye and a squeeze of the hand, and says I, ‘It’s not Tom Top-rail, who has been hammering away with two-and-thirty pounders at four ships at once, — for you know, Ben, we had four on the Sovereign at one time, — who is a-going to strike his flag or douse his colours to any such herring-looking fellow, although he is made up of heelball and pipeclay.’

“I must say this for the soldier, he was a civil chap, and stripped like a good one. He was not put together as I was, Ben, all ribs and tucks, like a tinker’s donkey; but he was made up of legs and arms like a superannuated spider. If I could only get alongside of him, it was the value of the admiral’s goldlaced hat and epaulettes to a waister’s stockings that I won the day without much trouble: but then, again, considering I saw double, and might hit at the wrong figure, some people might fancy the soldier, young and raw as he was.

" I shook hands with him before I began, and told him I rather liked him ; but that this was an affair of love, and the sooner we settled who liked her most, the more respectable it would be for both of us. At this time the landlord, who was quite astonished at our silence, came in, and offered to settle the business without the fight. He said he would make us both dead drunk, and take the girl himself ; but no sooner had he proposed this, than his wife flew at him like a bull-dog, clawed his face and tore his jacket, — so we lent a hand to send him back to his bar, having had his claret tapped in the room. This being done, there was a call for the soldier ; and he, casting a sheep's-eye at Betsy, and pumping up all his wind to make a sigh, made himself up to stand fire just as if he was standing at attention.

" Bill Jones, and some more of the Sovereigns stood by me ; Tom Walker, and three other chaps from the Temeraire, lent a hand to the soldier. I made all sail at him in a jiffy, and I should have run him aboard if the liquor had not puzzled my eyes. I tripped up over a part of the boards, and I went at him head-foremost, bobbing about like a jolly-boat in a cross tide. I don't know if so be the soldier had ever been at Malta and seen those half-and-half Africans puzzle the bulls, but he did just what they do ; he waited until I was within hail, and then stepped on one side. I had good way upon me, and ran end on to the store-room bulkhead : down went a whole barrow-load of pewter-pots and glasses, and the landlord's wife and daughter set up as great a row as a hundred sea-gulls after a piece of pork.

" Thank God, Ben, I'm no soft-headed fellow like a child six months old — not I ; no black chap in Jamaica ever had a thicker head, and all the mischief I got from my bad steerage was being brought up all standing, and having as many stars dancing before my eyes as would have served to navigate the Spanish fleet. Well, the soldier, who was sober, would not take any advantage of my lubberly conduct ; but when I fell down, as I did, he was the first to pick me up, and pass me over to my own side. The Temeraires gave three cheers, and the Sovereigns —

all off coats in a moment ; the women, for we had plenty of them, took the side on which their fancy-men were standing, and we had about as pretty a blow-up as ever was seen at a fair in Paddy's land. I don't much remember how it all finished ; but I recollect the next morning rousing up from the straw in a cold place they call the lock-up. I had plenty of company — all hands but two had been pressed by these peace-officers, and about eleven o'clock we all toed a line in front of the justice.

" 'What was this disturbance last night, constable ? ' said he. ' Speak out, I'm rather deaf — Eh ? ' And he clapped up one hand to his lug to make a kind of a trumpet.

" 'Please your honour's worship,' said one of those chaps, roaring out loud enough to be heard half-way up the Peak of Teneriffe, ' we took all these men and women from the Three Jolly Sailors, at the Point. They were all fighting like enemies, and making such a noise, it was impossible to sleep, and I told them to keep the peace.'

" 'Ah, quite right,' said the deaf justice with the spectacles ; ' you told them that now they might sleep in peace, like jolly sailors, after fighting their enemies : that's quite right — now go on with the charge.'

" 'There was a soldier,' the constable continued.

" 'Avaust there !' said Bill Jones ; ' it was Tom Top-rail there — he without his jacket — that charged.'

" 'Who charged ?' said his worship ; ' who gave him in charge ?'

" 'Tom commenced action,' said Jones ; ' he tried to run aboard of him.'

" 'Eh !' said the magistrate ; ' one at a time, if you please. Go on, constable, and don't speak as if you were whispering secrets. That man,' meaning Bill Jones, ' says, in the action he was aboard the same ship with him — gallant fellows ! Now go on.'

" 'I told them, please your worship,' continued the constable, ' that I would take them up.'

" 'Quite right,' replied the magistrate.

" 'So, your worship, they knocked me down.'

“ ‘Eh, my fine fellows, that was very wrong: knock down a peace-officer when doing his duty!’ ”

“ ‘He declared war first,’ said Jones; ‘for when we were a little in liquor, your worship, and were showing how we boarded the Frenchman, in came that fellow, with a dozen more of his press-gang, and walked us off. He popped us into a place without tobacco, grog, or lights; and he came master-at-arms over us, and clapped us under lock and key.’ ”

“ That speech of Jones’s quite flabbergasted his worship, for says he, — ‘Oh! I perceive this disturbance arose out of a press-gang wanting to press a soldier, who was regaling himself with tobacco and grog, and who was a little in liquor, and mistook the men for Frenchmen — so he used his arms, and was assisted by the master of the inn.’ ”

“ After hammering away at the drum-head of his worship’s ear, he was made at length to understand the whole business; but to lock up sailors then was no joke — so he gave us some advice, just the same as the captain used to give before he punished us for being drunk — and finished by saying he dismissed us. ‘Now go along,’ said he, ‘and be quiet, my men, — here’s five shillings to drink the King’s health.’ Upon which Bill called out, — ‘Three cheers, lads, for his worship!’ and in spite of some mutinous rascals, we did just as he told us, kept quite quiet and drank the King’s health; roaring out, ‘Long life to his worship, and bad luck to his clerk!’ We were quite orderly and sober, excepting when we got one of the constables to drink with us: then we sat down in a circle and played *goose*, and I’m blessed if we did not serve him out for clapping us under an arrest the night before; he never had had such a roasting before in his precious life.

“ Away we steered for the Three Jolly Sailors, and there we found Betsy. Poor dear little soul! she had taken our being captured so much to heart, that she and the soldier contrived to drink a sufficient quantity to forget our misfortunes. The soldier was all abroad, but Betsy could just have seen a hole through a grating.

“ ‘ Here,’ said I, ‘ Betsy, — here am I, Tom Toprail, with as long a tail as any man in the Sovereign, — as full a purse — at least it’s a-coming from the prizes, — and as hearty a chap as ever chewed tobacco. Now, Betsy, this is all about it : I have liberty, so have my mess-mates and shipmates here, to remain on shore till Saturday night ; — then, or on Sunday morning, we must all be on board to muster at division, and hear the articles of war read. We do that instead of going to church, and a man need as much remember them as his prayers, for if he does not, he may swing out of this life, and cut a caper from the yard-arm. Well, as I was a-saying — Betsy, there’s my flipper ; it’s none the worse for being rather hard in the palm and tarry about the claws ; — there it is, and, as I said before, I love you from the very bottom of my heart ;’ and I clapped my hand well below it to make her know how deep my love was. ‘ Now if you’ll act as becomes a woman, and pitch that soldier overboard, Bill Jones and the rest of them shall see you my wife to-morrow. And, Lord love you, Betsy ! who do you think would marry a soldier in these times ? chaps that stand in boxes half the night with a musket over their shoulders. Then to think that they are made to walk about, all to put their feet down at the same time ! I should like to see the drill-sergeant, and be d—d to him ! who could put his feet down this fashion.’ Forthwith I tipped them the double shuffle and fling, — clapped my hat, my neat little round hat, on one side of my head, and gave such a twirl that my tail came before my face. ‘ There !’ said I, as I stood upon one leg like the adjutant-bird, and clapped my left arm akimbo — ‘ let’s see the soldier that ever walked a parade do that in time, and my name’s not Tom Toprail. So now, Betsy, none of your coming Corporal Sly over me !’

“ She was a lovely craft : she clapped her headgear like corkscrews all down her pretty face : and then her eyes ! why she looked right through one ! — and such head-rails, — my eyes ! — and then her lips — whew ! what a kiss I gave her ! She was, every inch of her, cut out for a seaman’s wife, and she behaved like a woman, — she said

‘Yes,’ and we drank her health with three cheers ; the old fiddler struck up ‘Moll in the Wad,’ and he never played with more life and spirit before.

“It was all settled, all agreed ; so I took and slewed her round, and never in my born days did I see a neater-cut craft from stem to stern. She cut off a small piece of the tow-rope of my head ; and leaving her to bouse her own jib up as taut as she chose, I went out to look for a lawyer and a parson. I told the first fellow what I wanted, and he said he would soon set me on the right tack ; so he made the signal to follow the motions of the commodore : he clapped on his hat, and we all followed him.

“We hove-to off a decent looking harbour enough, and after a rum old chap, with a swivel eye, had asked me some questions, — I only remember one, which was, ‘how many wives I had alive already?’ — and after grinning at the lawyer, he handed out a licence — that’s the word, — and the business was all straight enough.

“‘You are a jolly good fellow,’ said I to the lawyer ; ‘what would you like to drink?’ I am in your debt for your assistance, and you can order any thing you like from shrub to swipes ; and if so be you would like to see my craft, you can step into the Jolly Sailors, and there we shall find her blowing a cloud and drinking the King’s health.’

“If you had seen my face, Ben,” said Tom to me as he came to this part of the story, “when the lawyer said he would merely take his bill, you would have thought that I had tumbled amongst the cannibals, and was like to be eat with my clothes on. He went home, and he chalked out two pound twelve and more for the licence ; he clapped on six shillings and eight-pence for his advice, and he charged thirteen and four-pence for having walked with us. Well, we all set to work to see what shots we had in the locker, and we could not muster between us more than two pound five ; and says I, ‘That’s enough for you, and all you’ve done, my hearty ! Why I’m obliged to skim up to the mast-head, and run out to the yard-arm, when it is blowing great guns and small arms, or raining

marlin-spikes with their points downwards, and I don't get as much as you have got for that scaly piece of paper in four months ; and then I stand to be shot at every time we come within sight of a Frenchman, whilst you sit there upon a high stool dangling your legs and dancing to your own tune. Hang me if I give you any more ; because why, do you know, old chap ? because I'm run aground ; I have not enough to turn over for a new moon or jingle upon a tombstone ; so take that and be civil.'

"The black man merely said he would have what was his due, or he would not give up the licence, and then we could not be married ; whereupon Bill Jones, who was always ready to assist a friend upon a pinch, made a grab at the thing and got hold of it. The little gentleman was too late to stop him ; and as Bill made sail out of the enemy's harbour, he made signal for one or two of us to blockade the port ; so when the lawyer was coming in chase, Joe Gibson and one or two more, kept sailing athwart his hawse, and Bill and I got safe with the prize. The landlord put us up to the rest, which was merely to send notice to the parish clerk of the splice ; and that matter was all right.

"When we had got over the business, and had ordered some ham and eggs, with a few sausages and cabbages, Bill clapped his hand upon the end of his neckerchief, and gave a puff of wind from his mouth, as much as to say, 'You may blow out the end like a pendant, and there's no weight to keep it steady.' There we were, about a dozen of us, brought to anchor alongside of the table, hoisting in our provisions and wine, and with the devil a farthing to pay the storekeeper of the victualling yard.

"I whispered to Bill — 'Bill,' says I, 'I'll just run over to Moses on the Hard ; I'll pledge my prize-money, and take a new set of toggery from his shop, in order to be decent-like in the church.'

"So I left Betsy, who was a cloth or two in the wind, and sailing a little by the head with the rest ; and away I steered to Moses. He was at home, or some one so cursedly like him that I should not have known one from the other : but all Jews are alike. The shark knew me ;

for many's the time I had taken a jacket from his kit when he came on board ; and knowing how sharp these fellows are to catch a seaman, I thought I would let him bite at the bait well before I hooked him ; so said I, ' Moses, here we are all alive, and with plenty of prizes : ' — ' To be sure, that was rather more smoke than reality.

" ' My Gosh ! yes,' says Moses ; ' how much wosh you take for your prize-money ? ' "

" ' There's a nibble ! thought I ; this fellow would swallow bait, hook, line, and all. — ' How much Moses ? Why, how much do you think I ought to get ? ' "

" ' Five pounds,' said Moses.

" ' Five devils ! ' said I ; ' more likely fifty, and that would hardly be enough for all the work we have had.' "

" ' It's a sight of money Mr. Toprail,' said Moses ; — ' fifty pounds ! it will be long times before it is paid, eh ? ' "

" ' Yes,' said I ; ' so long that a man might die before he got it. What's the price of this new turn-out, here ? ' "

" ' Oh, it's very sheap, Mr. Toprail, — very sheap ; just three pounds, — only one little three pounds. You can take it, Mr. Toprail upon the security of your prize-money. If you make me your agent, I can let you have many things : as you say, you may be dead and buried before the money is paid. Come, I'll give you twenty pounds and this suit of clothes for your share. You are an A. B. I know.' "

" ' Then you know wrong, my jolly friend Moses ; for I'm captain of the fore-top.' "

" ' Petty officer's rating,' said Moses. ' Fifty pounds ! quite impossible. I'll give you thirty — thirty now, this morning, in one hour ; and that's more worth to you, Mr. Toprail, than fifty, four years from this time.' "

" ' Thirty, and the suit of rigging complete : white ducks, blue jacket, black tie, white stockings, long-quartered shoes, new hat with Royal Sovereign marked on the ribbon. That, or go. Give us your hand upon it. I dare say you will get more than half back in traps. What's the price of a watch ? ' "

" ' He showed me a hundred all very fine watches ; and all very *sheap* as he said. I was not quite so sheepish as

to buy them. But I signed a paper, making over my prize-money; and I touched the thirty pounds; and wrapping my new suit up in a pocket-handkerchief which I bought of Moses, I steered away to the Three Jolly Sailors.

“Knowing that I should be rather hazy before the evening was over, I went up to a room in which I was to swing my hammock, and I clapped every thing under hatches, and stowed the key away, in a corner, where I knew I should find it the next day. I got a one-pound note changed; and I told Bill what tack I had been sailing upon, and we sat down for a jollification. Betsy was now a little less the worse for liquor than before, and I wanted her to take another glass, because I thought, poor girl, what she must feel at the thoughts of leaving the soldier, and all her friends, to live aboard with me when the ship was in harbour.

“‘No,’ says she, ‘no more, my dear Tom; but I’m thinking we had better go and get me some new ribbons for to-morrow. You see, mine are none the cleaner for last night’s business; besides, you know that I must look clean and tidy, or I shall not be much credit to one of the Sovereign’s crew.’

“‘That’s all as it should be, Betsy,’ said I; ‘I like a tidy craft; so up anchor, and away we go. Bill Jones will give you a rowlock for your larboard oar; and here’s mine for the other.’ So out we bolted, and sailed up the street in search of a shop. Betsy knew the navigation well; although, before long, we had contrived to run foul of a number of shore-going lubbers, — for though we understood the sailing orders, ‘Ships on the starboard tack to keep their wind, and those on the larboard tack to bear up,’ yet they knew nothing of navigation, and were with every flaw of wind sailing right athwart us. Every body looked at us; every one knew we belonged to Collingwood’s ship, and certainly never was there more respectful behaviour like, for they all tried to get out of our way; and as we were trying to do the same, we fell foul of one another. Betsy wanted some red ribbons; but I said, ‘No, you shan’t carry any false colours! — true blue

never stains.' So I made her clap on a blue ribbon in the cap, and round her dear little chest-trees, and bought a pair of blue shoes, after she had festooned some blue ribbon round the bottom of her dress. All this being done, I made sail back to the Jolly Sailors, and had a regular *sheevo* before we turned in. There was dancing, and drinking and kissing the bride; such cheering, and singing, and fiddling, that the like was never seen, and when I turned out the next morning, my head was turning like a boy's peg-top.

"Well, we mustered all hands of us by eight o'clock; and I'll tell you how we set about it: never was there such a lark at Portsmouth since the first day sailors were made. Bill and I, and some more, were all new-rigged, from the mast-head downwards: and Betsy looked a regular sailor's wife, when she turned out, spick and span. It was not right for chaps such as we, belonging to the Sovereign, to be married like a parcel of soldiers, who march to church with their side-arms and stand all attention before the parson. It is all well enough for them to toddle on foot; but I was not a-going to smuggle tobacco after that fashion. So, first of all, I mustered my shipmates, and then set about the order of sailing. We were twelve belonging to the Sovereign, and Betsy had six belonging to her, to sail in her wake. They were all dressed alike, but Betsy was worth them all. We were to be spliced at ten, and we had only two hours to get the convoy together.

"I felt my pockets — my money was safe; and I was up to the mark to do the thing like a good 'un. So I ordered all the coaches I could find. I got together six decent-looking articles, and we clapped our colours at the mast-head of the coachman. Some one said, they ought to be white; and I think it was old Drinkhard the landlord: but Bill, who had just taken a glass to the success of the day, shoved his fist in the old fellow's mouth; and says he, 'White! why, you fool, do you think we are a-going to show a flag of truce to the parson? No, no; blue's our colour; and if we go all fair and above-board, that's only what we ought to do: so up with the blue at the main;' — and we shoved large cockades into the hats,

and made the horse-whippers show another from the breast-work of their button-holes.

“Of course, bringing all the vehicles together in this manner made a bit of a stir amongst the folks about the Point; and they had time enough to reconnoitre our force, — for when we got the carriages in line, as we intended to start, we hove about for a good swig to the honour of the bride. In order to keep up also the hearts of the women, we made them hoist in enough to fill their spirit-rooms. Well, time went on, and a quarter to ten came. ‘Now,’ says Bill, ‘heave and a weigh, my lads; and come, stick on the colours, and hurrah aloft!’ So up I jumped, and handed Betsy into the cabin of the coach with three more of her tribe, whilst I and Bill got on the quarter-deck.

“‘Heave and paul,’ said Watson. ‘I’m not going in this jolly-boat on wheels! I’ll ride a horse, and keep a look-out ahead of the squadron; and what’s more, I’ve one a-coming, and here it is, so avaust heaving a minute. Let’s hang the colours to the flag-staff forward;’ and he claps a bunch of blue ribbons round the ears of the animal, jamming it into the ears, and saying, ‘There, my boys; there’s no mistake here; for as I make sail, they’ll see the colours even out of the hawse-holes! Jump up, youngster,’ said Watson, ‘behind me; and now I’m off.’ — Off he was, sure enough; for he gave himself too much heel to starboard, and fell on the other side. We soon righted him, however, and he started ahead.

“‘You must n’t sit on the roof,’ said the coachman to me and Bill and Scrapehard, who had got on the quarter-deck of the coach, the old fiddler playing ‘Moll in the Wad,’ and slewing round on his stern like a fifer on the capstan when it’s ‘up anchor!’

“‘Drive on,’ said Bill, ‘or I’m blessed if I don’t sit on your shoulders! Why, here’s a mutiny before we read our commissions! You are a pretty particular scoundrel to say that Tom and I, two fore-topmen, are going to be smuggled into your stow-hole below. Start ahead and save the tide, or we shall have the parson a-lecturing us. — Make sail,’ said Bill, as he stood up-

right on the roof, 'and follow the motions of the commodore ;' and off we went.

" ' Oh ! the Gibson ahoy !' said I.

" ' Hulloo !' said he.

" ' Keep close in the commodore's wake ; and if your chap does not clap a little more canvass on his coach, do you supersede him, — do you hear ?' "

" ' Ay, ay, sir !' said Gibson.

" Well, the chap that steered Joe would not crack on — not a bit : so Joe says, ' By your leave, my man ;' and he endeavoured to take hold of the tiller-ropes.

" ' No,' said the coachman ; ' this is my place.'

" ' Your place !' said Joe. ' I'll let you know that I'll be captain of my own ship ;' and he mimics an old skipper, who used always to begin with that when he intended to end with the cat. ' So, out of the way, guardo, and make way for a stationer.' The coachman still held on, and Joe still held on also. Joe got the whip, and began to bellows away at the nags, until the animals, not being accustomed to punishment, forged ahead in spite of the hawser which was fast to their bows, and they ran their bowsprit right smack through the after-panels of our stern-frame, and carried away the stern-lantern.

" ' Up helm, you lubberly scoundrel !' said Joe : ' I told you not to pass the commodore, but to back the mizen-top-sail in time, and there you are right on board of him. Why, you lubber, you went end-on like a bull with his peak up ;' and seizing hold of the tiller-ropes, he gave the larboard one a haul, the horses made a start, the larboard wheel got foul of a post, and over went Joe, coachman, and coach. Joe, who was like a cat, fell upon his legs without being hurt, and called out for the next ship in the line to take the place of the one capsized ; but, as I was not going into the action without all my line complete, I gave the signal to heave-to to repair damages.

" The women in the cabin thought they were going down stern foremost, and roared out to open the cabin-doors ; whilst Joe, and a landsman who was standing thereabout, lifted the coachman, who had been wounded in the leg, into a 'pothecary's, which was within hail. Leav-

ing him there, we righted the craft, and Joe jumped upon deck, seized hold of the tiller-ropes, and made signal for ready for sea. We filled our maintop-sail and forged ahead ; and Joe, who had got both lines, one in each hand, and who sprawled his legs out on the foot-rope to hinder his fetching way when she rolled,—for we were right before the wind,—looked as if he understood navigation. His eyes were wide open ; but some of the ribbons got foul of his optics ; his long curls—for, do you mind, in those days we wore our hair like corkscrews—got blowing athwart his face ; his hat was cocked on one side, and his big chew was a little to leeward, although his tail stuck out behind like the staff of a rocket, to keep him head to wind. He got hauling at both ropes at once, so that his vessel was not under command ; she had no steerage way, but just the reverse ; for the animals made a sternboard before Joe could drop the steerage to get hold of the whip, and he backed aboard of the coach astern of him.

“ This threw the whole line in confusion ; and when Joe started on end again, he kept yawing about like a pig in a high wind ; it was hard a-starboard and hard a-port every moment. The squadron were all in disorder, and although Bill roared like a bull for the ship next in line to make sail and occupy Gibson’s place, yet it was no use ; there was not a master in the fleet who could take charge of a vessel in such rocky water ; and the crews of half the squadron were in a state of mutiny. I think Gibson would have weathered the corner of the church after all, and come safe to anchor, if it had not been for about a thousand spalpeens of boys who kept shouting ‘ A sailor adrift on a carriage ! ’ and bobbing under the horses’ noses until they got discontented at being worked so hard, and began to mutiny outright. One fired away at Joe with his heels, who dropped the helm and touched him up over the stern. This made both worse ; for Joe had got all hands to the whip, and was only determined to punish his crew for their bad behaviour.

“ We had not got far, when we found the look-out craft hove-to and trimming ship.

“ ‘ Hulloo,’ said I, ‘ what’s the matter, Watson ? ’

“ ‘ We have hove-to to repair damages,’ said he ; ‘ for as I was steering end-on for the church, the craft got into a head sea, and, after bobbing about, run aground upon her knees, and shook my timbers a bit, for I went over the bows ; whilst the youngster, as the ship lifted forward with the sea, slipped over the stern ; but we shall be ready in a moment. I’ve repaired damages forward, and I’m shifting my ballast aft, for she sails too much by the head. I can manage her well enough now ; but I think you had better shift the boy on one of your nags. So away with you, little one,’ said he, giving him a slap on the back ; ‘ and mind, do you hear ? ’ ‘ Victualled on board the day discharged ! ’ ”

“ ‘ Come on deck here,’ said Bill ; ‘ and, do you hear ? turn to and dance us a hornpipe as we go along. Strike up, old Scrapehard ! and tip us your best hornpipe ; and, squadron, make sail ! ’ ”

“ In a thort time we had got off the harbour and were unlading the cargo, when Joe came along, going about fourteen knots, his tiller-ropes lost, and his ship running away with him.

“ ‘ Shorten sail,’ said Bill, ‘ or you’ll be aboard the church.’ ”

“ ‘ Luff, Joe, luff, and weather it,’ said I. ‘ My eyes ! there he goes, right end on ! ’ and down came the horses, pitching Joe over the bows.

“ Nothing ever hurt his health but going without his grog. He was up in a moment, and reported that his ship was wrecked, her stem-piece stove in, and that she was bilged and lying over on her starboard side. The crew were all safe, and we prepared to enter the harbour. I caught hold of Betsy by the flipper ; and Bill was behind with Moll Davis. She was rather the worse for her allowance in the morning, and would sing, although a chap who said he was a clerk in the establishment tried to stop her.

“ ‘ To the devil wid you ! ’ said Moll Davis. ‘ Do you think, you black-looking raven, that I won’t sing a song on the day of Betsy’s marriage ? ’ And she set off at the top of her voice, which was rather thick and hoarse than otherwise. After she had given us the song, and all hands were aboard, we walked into the church as quiet and as orderly as men at a funeral.

"Well, we were all ranged one alongside of each other round some rail-work, and the parson stood inside. He soon began to read something, which none of us seemed to understand, until he looked me full in the face with one eye, and said he, 'Will you have this woman to thy wedded wife?' Now the parson squinted a bit with the other, and I thought his eye, which was looking towards his star-board ear, was upon Moll Davis; and as I understood the words to mean, whether I would take Moll Davis to my wedded wife, I answered, 'Certainly not, sir.'

"The clerk began to say something; but Bill soon stopped him by saying, 'Avaust heaving, young man! had'n't you better take a reef in your jawing-tacks, and double your distance?'

"The clergyman explained what it meant, and he asked me again: 'Certainly, sir,' said I; 'I come here for that same purpose.'

"'You must say,' said the clerk, '*I will.*'

"'Certainly!' said I.

"'That won't do,' continued the devil-dodger; 'you must say only, *I will.*'

"'*I will,*' says I; 'and now I hope you are satisfied.'

"We got through the business in about a quarter of an hour; and we were then taken into a room to sign our names.

"Well, I never could write, for I never had no education like; so I clapped a cross, such as we make to the paper about the prize-agents. Well, Betsy could not write, so she stuck another. Then they told Bill he must witness it, and he could n't write either: and then Moll Davis made her mark, which was a large black blot on the book; for she was then all nohow, and dabbed down the pen, and then shoved it athwart the clerk's muzzle. But the best of all was Bill when he heard the little chap in black ask for a fee.

"'What's that?' said Bill; 'I never heard of that liquor before.'

"'It's money I want,' said the clerk: 'any little gift — a crown or so.'

"'Take that upon your crown,' said Bill; and he put

the clerk's hat on, and giving it one rap, flattened in the jib-sheet, and only left the mouth and chin to be seen.

" 'Now then,' said I, after all hands had kissed Betsy, 'the devil take the hindmost, and let's have a ride round the town. And, perhaps,' said I respectfully, — 'perhaps your worship will come with us? — we won't stow you in the cabin; you shall be up aloft amongst the seamen on the quarter-deck, where you can see the ship is properly worked.' I am blessed if I don't think he thought we were going to press him; for he sheered off, leaving his clerk to see us off.

"No sooner was he gone, than the little black fellow followed us out, and began to say something quite disrespectful to Bill; who quietly turned round, took the little chap under his arm, and clapped him in among the women. They began to play 'none of my child,' and shoved him about from one to another, until, as we were sailing along at a good rate, the door flew open, and out went old straight-hair, with a shot in his stern which nearly sent him across the street.

"All Portsmouth turned out to see us. There was Watson touching up his horse over the taffrail, and it kicked up behind high enough to have lifted the spanker-boom from the crutch, and went on worse than ever. I roared out for him to pass within hail, but the animal would not answer its helm at all; but slewing round like a boat in an eddy, it made a start on one side, and in went Watson into a gentleman's breakfast parlour; while away went the horse, tossing up its head and tail, and kicking and flinging in all directions: this cleared the passage for the squadron, and on we went through the crowd.

"Whenever the boys cheered, I stood up and returned the salute with an equal number of guns. Slap we went through one street, down another; round one corner, then another; Bill and I on the top of the coach, standing on the roof and cheering. Old Scrapehard was fiddling like a good one; the youngster, with his hat held up over his head, was standing on one leg like a flamingo, and slewing about like a dog-vane in a calm; whilst the women had got their heads out of the windows and made more row

than the devil in a gale of wind. At last the horses were near coming to an anchor without our ranging the cables ; they were bitted already ; so we drove down to the Point, took the bridles in, and got our crew and passengers all safe. Then it was that we got to work with the knives and forks ; and we played a rare stick at eating. We stuck at it, dancing and smoking, until ten o'clock at night, when all hands were as drunk as owls ; and I had given Betsy nearly all my money to take care of, which she did right well, for I never could get a farthing back.

“ So ended my marriage ; and it was a real sailor's marriage, got up in a moment, and it lasted nearly as long. We got on well enough the next day : but on Sunday morning we all returned to our ships ; and I told the first lieutenant that I had got spliced, and asked to have Betsy aboard. The ship was going round to the River the next day, so I could n't get leave either to go to her, or she to come to me. I thought, to be sure, she might as well have tried to get alongside ; but I never got a glance of her eye from the morning of our mustering on board till now. I got one of the purser's steward's lads, who could handle a pen without making a cross, and I wrote her this letter : —

“ ‘ Dear Betsy, — Why don't you come alongside in the bum-boat ? I have been standing in the starboard fore-chains from one till four bells, overhauling the craft which came within hail. Come, that's a good girl ! up stick and make sail ! If I can only get a word with you under the bows, I'm satisfied.’

“ Well, what do you think she writes to me, or gets somebody else to write to me ? —

“ ‘ Old Tom, — I know you are ship-bound, church-bound, and poverty-struck ; you belong to no parish but *Port Sea*, and you may whistle for good luck and for Betsy Matson.’

“ It ran right into my heart, and gave me the hiccups for a fortnight ; and I never was all right in the head until I heard she had married the soldier under another name, and that I had saved my allotment.”

There's many a sailor who marries as Tom did, and gets a divorce without bothering the lawyers.

CHAPTER V.

I shall see my parents, kiss the tears
From their pale hollow cheeks, cheer their sad hearts,
And drive that gaping phantom, meagre want,
For ever from their board.— LILLO.

I HAD been from home about thirteen years, when Captain Nelson went to France. During that time I had only heard from or of the old people once. I now got leave to go to Cawsand Bay until his return. He gave me money enough to pay my passage, and I started with a good store of pocket-lining, intending to buy new nets, or lend a hand in purchasing a sail or repairing the boat. Away I went with a light heart and a fair wind, having in the fob of my pocket twenty-five pounds, and singing—

“ I that once was a ploughboy a sailor am now.”

I soon got on the right course for Plymouth, and I knew by the distances marked upon stones how many miles I had run. I went on, as all men do at first when they start on an expedition they fancy, head down and legs out. I took as long strides as a goose in dry weather, and walked as fast as an ostrich over the Pampas. I got to a place called Hounslow without feeling a bit fatigued; and seeing a decent kind of harbour, I came to anchor, and called for a pot of porter and a pipe. In the shaking of a handspike I was so comfortable that I would not have called the King my grandfather. It was a pretty good kind of house, with a large daub called the King's Head outside, and there were several country-looking lubbers in smock-frocks who came in to take a drop; and, as at this time it began to rain, I thought I might as well anchor for the night. I began therefore to look out for a berth.

“ Hulloo! shipmate,” said I, to a better kind of looking fellow, “ what kind of hammocks do they swing in this house?”

The fellow gave me a quick glance of the eye, and I

thought I felt him reading my heart. He answered, "Oh, very good, every thing a man could want to make him comfortable and happy. But where are you bound to, for you don't belong to this place?"

"No, not I" (I wondered how he guessed it): "I am going to Plymouth."

"To Plymouth?" says he.

"Yes," said I, "to Plymouth; the wars are over now, and I am off for home. I am not without a shot in the locker," giving my pocket a bit of a smack.

"I can assist you, my noble-hearted fellow," says my friend; "give me your hand. You sailors are the best men in the world."

"Take a drop out of my jorum, sir," said I. "Here landlord, freshen hawse here — another pot of porter."

"Yes, *sir*," said he, "but who pays for it?"

"I do, you lubber," says I. "Do you think I'm a shark to come swallowing the bait and then shake myself off the hook? No, I never did that: so, here's your pay, and I have enough left to buy a hogshead of porter, and a purser's bread-bag of tobacco; so, stir your stumps, old Blowhard."

He was as fat as a ground tier butt, and seemed as if all his crew inside of him was pumping up his breath; his face was as red as a boiled lobster, and he wore a great white apron which came down to his knees, and from those to his fore foot he wore top-boots. He seemed to know my new companion, and he looked at him as much as to say, "You're a pretty scoundrel, I'm blessed if you arn't."

I thought it was all jealousy, and paid no attention to the landlord, but asked my friend how he proposed that I should get on my way to my journey's end?

"Why, this way," he answered. "I am going beyond Exeter myself, for I live down in that part of the world; and as I know most of the common carriers, I get into their waggons, and thus for a very little money get home to my family. I advise you to follow this plan also; for what is the use of paying the Lord hardly knows how much, to be upset from a coach, or of walking upwards of two hundred miles, sleeping every night in some strange

inn, and perhaps robbed if you are out after dark? We can go together if you like; and company, you know, will make the journey agreeable; but, as the waggon will not be here for a couple of hours, we may as well have some dinner; for I am uncommonly hungry, and we shall get nothing from the time we start until the next morning."

I agreed to all this, because it looked so very friendly. We accordingly ordered some cold meat and potatoes; my friend declaring that I should be his guest, and should peck and perch with him.

After we had finished our dinner we had a little grog, and my friend was very anxious to make me-drink; but I never was a man given to liquor. I like now and then a pot of beer and my pipe, and I love to see myself surrounded by a jolly set of fellows, who have rubbed through life like sailors, and who carry their grey hairs about as honours won in old age. But no man can say that I was ever brought up to the gangway for being intoxicated!

Well, I drank my allowance, and by and by, about eight o'clock, the waggon was passing through the village. My friend could not find his money at the moment; so I untied the knot in my handkerchief, and paid for him: we both got up behind and bundled into the straw.

I was in a rare humour for spinning a yarn, and I set to work and related my life; during which time, when I spoke of home, my friend managed to get out of me where I kept my money, and commended my prudence, as I said that no land-shark could get hold of it without he ripped me open.

It was about midnight when we passed through a little town; there was a light in one of the public-houses, so we freshened the nip; and as my friend was now evidently sailing by the head, I took him under my care, and supported him to the waggon. He was very much overcome, and he clung round me closely, making a great number of false steps, and staggering like a drunken brute as he was. At last, when I wanted to lift him into the waggon, he swore he would not go another inch farther; that he felt hot, although it was the month of December; and that he would bathe in the river which was near us. For some

time I would not let him ; but at last he got so quarrelsome and made such a noise, that I jumped into the waggon, and gave him permission to go to a place where he is snug enough now if he has left this world.

I soon fell asleep, and when I awoke it was broad daylight, but a windy squally morning : so I thought I'd stand two calls before I unbuttoned my eyes for a long spell, and I soon got to sleep again. The waggoner about an hour afterwards roused me up, and we went into a house and had some breakfast. He was a stout fellow, and ate like one of his own cart-horses,—it did me good to see him feed so heartily. I swore I would stand treat, and pulling out the end of my black silk neckerchief, I started like a harpooned porpoise when I found the end cut clean off, and all my stores for present service gone. I looked at the waggoner, but he had so honest a face, that I could not suspect him ; although, at first, I had some doubts about his honesty. I immediately clapped my hand upon my private store-room, in which I had stowed away the supplies for my father. It did not require any fumbling about my fob ; the lower part of the pocket was ripped open, and I found that I had only eight guineas left out of twenty-five that I intended to take to the old folks.

Well, I was certain that I had been in company with a pirate. The honest old waggoner said he did not think the other traveller was so drunk as he pretended to be, and he made no doubt that, whilst I was endeavouring to steady him last night, he had cut my pocket and taken out the money. I now thought of tackling ship and returning ; but in a short time resolved to proceed, and to be more prudent in future. So, stowing the money which I had left in a place that should defy detection, I took out one guinea, and tied that, or the change of it, in the corner which was left in my neckerchief.

I made friends with the waggoner, and walked by his side almost all day : towards evening I got into my straw again, and slept like a weasel with one eye open comfortably enough. In seven days' time we got to Plymouth, and I did not stand long in taking leave of the waggoner, who

was contented with four shillings, and told me that he should be returning in a fortnight, which would be quite long enough for me to remain in Cawsand Bay. I told him that I should be steering up to London about that time, and would be with him: then giving my trowsers a hitch up, I stepped out like a good one for Mutton Cove, got into the ferry, and was soon over at Mount Edgecombe.

I trotted away like a postman, never looking behind me, and carrying a press of sail, until I came to the turn which overlooks the bay and commands a view of the village. Here I stopped. I remember at this moment the feeling which overcame me. I saw before me the cottage in which I was born and reared. I could perceive the door from which I had escaped, and left my poor father and mother in all the agony of uncertainty whether I had been kidnapped or murdered. From the time of leaving them I had never sent them any tidings; and afterwards, when I had learned to write, I had grown somehow dim in memory, and had forgot my poor mother in the scenes I have already described.

I had grown to be a man; the sultry sun of the West Indies had scorched me, sickness had altered, manhood had changed me. I knew I could advance unknown, but I feared lest I should hear some bad news of the old people. I stood more than an hour undecided how to act. I watched each girl that I saw running to and fro, and thought of my own little sister Jane; and it was sunset before I wound up my resolution to face the old people.

"Cheer up, Ben!" said I to myself. "Had not the land-sharks grabbed your hard-won money, all might have been well; for the old boy would then have seen that I had not forgotten him although so long separated from home."

The sun was down by five o'clock, and the drizzling rain and gusty winds showed that a gale was at hand. The boats all came in together, and every man and mother's son was in activity. The women took the fish away in baskets, whilst the crew of the different boats set to work to haul them up above high-water mark. I was soon in amongst them, and I watched for my father's boat. Near

me was a weather-beaten Samson, who, with his crew and his boys, soon began to place their vessel in security. The next and the next seemed well provided with hands; but the farthest one seemed afraid of coming in contact with the larger vessels. This was the one I sought.

"Poor old fellow, you will be drenched to the skin," thought I to myself, "before you get your boat safe, without some one lends you a hand; and as I'm not afraid of rubbing the skin off mine, I am just the lad to assist you." So saying, I walked up to him, shipped the capstan-bar, and when he had made fast the rope, I hove round with the two men who formed the crew. My assistance soon placed the boat above the tide. As I was walking away to help some one else, he came to me, and sure enough it was poor old father! I determined, however, seeing that he did not know me again, not to discover myself at present. In return for the good turn I had done him, he said that his dame was getting his supper ready, and he hoped I would come and take shelter from the gale. "I know what you are from your rig," said he, "you're some man-of-war's-man turned adrift for the peace."

"Just so," said I; "much obliged to you — I'll come."

Well, I shouldered some of the nets, and carried up a basket on my arm, until we approached the old cottage, and into this we steered.

I knew my mother at a glance. Poor old soul! age had advanced upon her, and although I could discover the features of former times, the marks of grief were deep in her face. She made no reply to my father's remark about his success, but went to work to dress some of the fish. On turning round she saw me, and looked at father, as much as to ask who and what I was: "A willing lad," said my father, "to assist the old. He saw the weather was getting worse, and the rain coming on hard, so he came and lent us a hand to secure the boat; and now I have made him come here, dame, for some supper, for he seems all adrift in this part of the world."

"Oh, John," said mother, "Why, as I'm a living woman, he looks something like Ben!"

A dead cold chill ran through me. There was a tenderness in poor mother's manner, which made my eyes flow like a waterfall. I brushed away the tears with my sleeve.

"Ah, no! poor Ben! perhaps he is out of this miserable world," said the old man, "But come, give the lad a welcome. Bring that stool to the table, and we'll have a fish and a potatoe. There, sit down, every man to his station, and the cook to the foresheet, as they say on board a man-of-war. There's a knife and fork; we have got some of those left yet; and this gale will raise the price of fish."

In a short time supper was ready. There was some bread, the fish, and the potatoes; and although I have had regular feeds many a time when the dollars were not valued more than penny-pieces, and we have been surrounded by those who fought with us, and were wounded to save us, yet I call Heaven to witness that I never felt so happy as I did when I found I was sometimes in their thoughts, —and that I was once more seated by their side.

The old boy, remarking that I looked rather the worse for wear, got a bottle from a small cupboard, and pouring out some brandy for my mother and myself, not forgetting his own glass, spliced it with water, and then handed the jug to me.

But where was Jane all this time? I was anxious not to discover myself, and therefore did not say a word; but I looked round the cottage in the hope of finding some mark of female dress by which I could guess if she were alive. I saw nothing, however, except a curious old chair which stood up in a corner; and when I took my eyes off it, I found that both father and mother were looking at me with so inquisitive a stare, that I began to fear I was recognised.

"Ah!" he began, "that chair reminds us often of our troubles; we keep it that we may not forget those who have forgotten us."

My mother looked like a wax figure in tears as my father went on to speak.

"In that chair we laid our son Ben when he was first born, for we had no cradle in the house; he left us when

he was about twelve years of age, and we have never heard of him since ! But, what's the matter with you, young man ? You change colour like a dying dolphin. I *will* love you, dame ! just see how like he is to our Ben !”

I could not hold on any longer — the tears stood in my eyes. “ Stop, father,” said I, “ you shall be happy again, I hope.” My mother, who had never taken her gaze off me, immediately recollected me, and had me in her arms in a moment, exclaiming, “ Ben ! Ben ! God Almighty be praised that I see you before I die !”

Father was soon on the other side of me, whilst mother unbuttoning my shirt-sleeves, showed father the mark of an anchor which one of the fishermen had pricked out about a year before I left them.

“ Lord bless you, boy !” said father, “ why how changed you are ! But now I look at you again, what a fool I must have been not to have known you at first !”

“ Tell us, Ben,” said poor mother, “ where you have been. Oh ! I could look at you for ever !” and she knelt down upon the ground, and kept her eyes fixed upon my face. I could not rouse up a word from the store-room of my voice. I was right aback, and they saw it. At length, father said, “ I have bad news to tell you, Ben, about your sister. A fellow of the name of Tackle, as great a scoundrel as ever lived, came and kept company with Jane ; and Jane soon liked him — that was as plain as a pikestaff. Very shortly afterwards, Jane told us that Tackle had offered to marry her, and that she hoped we had no objection. I took her hand, for I loved her dearly, and ‘ Jane,’ says I, ‘ you know very little of Tackle ; he may be a good one, but his father never was : a black bitch, they say, never has white pups, and a wild duck never lays a tame egg : his father was transported for a highway robbery, but got to windward of the gallows ; his mother soon danced at Plymouth Dock, at the penny hops of the sailors. Besides all this, Jane, although he could not help what his father and mother were, he is a bad-humoured man, is always quarrelsome, and whenever so much pleased, looks more like a devil than a Christian. But this was it Ben, — Tackle was a stout fellow, and once or twice when the young men came

a courting, he stood like a mastiff, and growled them off; then managed to pick a quarrel, fought a battle, and, by this dogged kind of courage and strength, established himself firmer in the girl's affections. Women always love your daring men. Dame did not like the match either, for Tackle had no money, and although we were better off than we are now, yet I could not give the young people either money or employment; for, said I, fishermen are like service — no inheritance. Dame spoke to Jane; but she cried and got, into her chair near the fire, and could do nothing; she was quite beside herself — absent like — of no use whatever in regard to the house; and she would sit by the hour, looking at the fire as if she expected Tackle to jump out of it, with her hands upon her knees, — and so she would remain and do nothing; and when that's the case, depend upon it, Ben, the woman is lost — idleness is the road-maker of love. Well, it was not long after this, when I was at sea and dame at work, that Jane went off with Tackle: we heard of them at Plymouth Dock, and two days afterwards we lost all trace and have never heard of them any more."

The tear stood in poor father's eye: as for mother, she cried bitterly. At length father endeavoured to turn away his melancholy thoughts to some other subject. — "Now, Ben," said he, "where have you been?"

I was on the point of breaking adrift with the log-line of my adventures, when, raising the latch of the door, in came a small snub-nosed chap who turned out to be an attorney's clerk. The poor old folks seemed taken quite aback.

"Well, Mr. Brace," he began, "are you going to pay these three last quarters' rent or not? — because, if you do not, out you will turn bag and baggage to-morrow morning."

"Really, sir," said father, "I am very distressed, — very sir, indeed: I have no money — this is all I have in the world;" and he showed two or three half-crowns. "I know I owe my landlord more than I can pay at present; but I trust that his honour will not throw two poor old creatures upon the parish, or turn them adrift on the world in the middle of winter."

"Come, Mr. Brace," said the skeleton of the law, "fine words, you know, butter no parsnips: I have been at you every day since June, and now I'll stand it no longer, for I don't believe one word you say. Here I find you sitting by a comfortable fire, with a visitor to assist you in emptying a bottle of brandy; and I don't require the nose of a pointer to swear that you have made a jolly supper. And there's your good old woman's eyes, which speak volumes as to the attention she has paid to her consumptive friend, the almost finished bottle. I'm not to be done; to-morrow you will pay, or I will seize every rag in the house, and you may turn out and wash your eyes in the rain."

I was posted behind this land-shark, my jacket off, — father was standing up with a look of trouble which might have melted even the heart of an attorney's clerk; whilst mother sat weeping like one of the dripping caves in the North of Ireland. When the wretch had finished his speech, I just took him by the cuff of the coat, and giving him a little head-way with my foot, sent him to the full enjoyment of the cold lodgings he had intended for the old folks. As he had left his umbrella behind him, however, he returned for it.

"What!" says I, "have you cleared for action, and come into the enemy's port to battle the watch with him? I'm for you, my hero"—and I seized him by the throat. The little quill-driver fixed his hands upon my shirt-sleeves; his face was as red as a lobster, and he blustered out something about assault and battery. "Here's assault your battery for you," says I; and I gave his nose broadside. He came at me, after this, twirling his hands as if he was spinning rope-yarns; but I touched him up on his figure-head, and soon darkened his toplights: for, do you see, I was young and stout, and he might as well have knocked his fists against a stone wall as against my head—for my skull had grown thick like a black fellow's. Well, it all finishes by my rolling him in a dirty puddle, and by giving him a salute, which was 'more honoured in the breach than in the observance,' as I learnt by heart.

"I hope, sir," says I, "there's nothing personal—but you are a d—d backbiting, dirty, dishonest scoundrel, and

much better in the mud than in an honest man's house." So saying, I shut the door, and came to an anchor.

"Oh! Ben, Ben, you have ruined us!" said my mother; "to-morrow we shall certainly be turned out, and all our furniture sold. I know he will never rest until he is revenged. You had better therefore be off at once, or he'll have you for striking him; he'll take the law of you."

"I tell you what it is," says I, "I'll set up my damaged shirt here against his nose, and I think I've the best of it."

"Never mind, dame," said the old fisherman. "To find Ben at such a moment is worth all the money in the world! Now the attorney may go to——. I'll soon turn the tide of misfortune; I feel as if I was not twenty years of age; I could dance a hornpipe and kick up Bob's a-dying."

Night came on, and a precious night it was. Mother was for giving me her bed, and father talked of pricking for the softest plank; but I said, "No, I'm the youngest, and the best to caulk the seam;" so I took up my station in the old chair. Though I have stood by Nelson's side when the proudest victory ever gained was won, yet I never felt as I did at that moment. I thought somehow I could fly: I felt so light, so happy. Well, the old pair blessed me,—I that had left them, and had caused such trouble to them, and who, had I remained, might perhaps have saved Jane also. Then father snapped his fingers, and says he, "A dog-fish's eye for that snub-nosed attorney's clerk! we'll manage somehow." And to bed they went.

I slept like a top, and was making up the lee-way of my nap, when I heard a row at the door, and I saw the little shark, the clerk's master, with his precious assistant, who was marked with a pair of beautiful black eyes, and his nose as big as a cocoa-nut.

"Hulloa! shipmate," said I, "you must have run stem on to the chimney-sweep, and taken some of his soot to paint your figure-head."

"Here is the account of rent due for this house," said the fellow to my father: "do you intend to pay it?"

"How much is it, old Snuff and Twopenny?" said I.

"Four pounds, Mr. Impudence," said he.

"Have you got a receipt?" said I.

"No," said he.

"Then you may just trudge back and get it, old Shiver-the-Mizen."

"Where's the money?" said he.

"Here," said I, "and more besides."

"I'll have you up before the magistrate," said the clerk, "for the assault upon me last night."

"You be d—d!" said I.

Upon which the attorney whispered to his clerk, who ran away home, whilst the old one blockaded the port. He soon returned with the receipt.

"There's your money, my boy," said I; "and I don't want any receipt for the attack you made upon me last night, and tore my shirt. You show that *as plain as the nose on your face*. So, brush, old Sweepings and Tape strings. Nothing personal, you know—but curse me if ever I saw such an ill-begotten bandy-legged beggar, with eyes like two burnt holes in a blanket, and mouth like a sick cod-fish." So away he went.

CHAPTER V..

The tar's a jolly tar who loves a beauty bright,
And at sea often thinks of her charms;
Who toasts her with glee on a Saturday night,
And wishes her moor'd in his arms. — DIDDIX.

BOTH father and mother looked ten years younger when they found themselves once clear of the rent, and likely to do well for some months to come. Mother cast off the stopper of her tongue, and she rattled her words out like a chain-cable through an iron hawse-hole.

I now cast my eye upon a pretty black-eyed daughter of a baker. Figure, face, feet, d—me if I ever saw such a craft! She seemed to like me also. I left Cawsand at the

end of the fortnight, telling Susan that as sure as I ever returned a living man I would marry her if she was then disposed to have me. I made mother promise also to take care of her, and so giving all my money to the old folks except one guinea, I turned my back on the cottage.

Well, I went away from home, promising never to lose sight of father and mother again; and, as Susan could write a bit, she was to stand captain's clerk for them, and not only read my letters to them, but write their answers. Susan was always to be found at father's cottage; and mother loved her—and so it all went smooth enough.

In the year 1784, Nelson, who had tumbled in love with a clergyman's daughter in France, thought it prudent to get afloat again, in order to avoid marriage; so he asked Lord Hood for an appointment; and he got the *Boreas*, of twenty-eight guns, and once again we went to the West Indies. I always retained my old rating of coxswain; for in those times they might have rated a lad of twelve for that situation, and no fault found. I occasionally assisted the clerk, and thus I made good progress in my writing and reading, and soon became a scholar; and as I had been so long with Nelson, he placed confidence in me, and I was made to copy many of his letters.

I have not much to say about this cruise in the *Boreas*, because it was peace time; but, somehow, Nelson got embroiled in many differences of opinion about the right of the Americans to trade. Nelson soon put his opinion in force; for, on a stated day, he seized several Yankee vessels which, to his knowledge, had interfered with the privileges of Great Britain in trading from America to the West Indies. This being done in defiance of the opinion of the custom-house officers and even of the different governors, all hands began to hate him, and had he left the ship his life would not have been safe. However, when the government at home came to investigate the business, the conduct of Captain Nelson was very much applauded, and received the warmest approbation. If he had no enemies of his country to fight, he had plenty of lawyers to contend against.

Good, we are told, often comes out of evil. Owing to

the law-suit which arose about the American vessels, he got acquainted with the lady he afterwards married. The captains of the ships which Nelson had detained brought an action against him, and laid the damages at 40,000*l.*; and they tried all in their power to arrest him. He remained in his ship, and the marshal came on board once or twice to seize him; but Mr. Wallis, the first lieutenant, always bamboozled him, and he went on shore again as wise as he came.

One day, one of the lieutenants—I think it was Wallis—in speaking of the confinement to his ship which Nelson was obliged to suffer for fear of arrest, said *he pitied him*. “*Pity!*” exclaimed Nelson: “*pity*, did you say? I shall live, sir, to be *envied*; and to that point I shall always direct my course.” Eight weeks he remained in durance, bottling up his revenge.

The President of Nevis, one Mr. Herbert, took a great fancy to him, and it was generally reported that he had offered to become Nelson’s security for 10,000*l.* if he would allow himself to be arrested. It was at his house that Nelson first saw Mrs. Nisbet, the widow of Dr. Nisbet, whom he afterwards married, the lady being then only nineteen years of age. Nelson’s letter to his uncle, Mr. Suckling, gives his own description of his future wife’s birth, parentage, and education.

“Boreas, Nevis, Nov. 14th, 1785.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Not a scrap of a pen have I by the last packet from any relation in England; but, however, you see I don’t think I am forgot—more especially when I open a business, at which perhaps you will smile, in the first instance, and say, ‘This Horatio is for ever in love.’ My present attachment is of pretty long standing; but I was determined to be fixed before I broke the matter to any person. The lady is Mrs. Nisbet, widow of Dr. Nisbet, who died eighteen months after her marriage, and has left her with a son. From her infancy (for her father and mother died when she was only two years of age) she has been brought up by her mother’s brother, Mr. Herbert, President of Nevis;

a gentleman whose fortune and character must be well known to all the West India merchants, therefore I shall say nothing upon that head. Her age is twenty-two; and her personal accomplishments you will suppose *I think* equal to those of any person I ever saw; but, without vanity, her mental accomplishments are superior to those of most people of either sex: and we shall come together as two persons most sincerely attached to each other from friendship. Her son is under her guardianship, but totally independent of her.

“But I must describe Herbert to you, that you may know exactly how I stand; for when we apply for advice, we must tell all circumstances. Herbert is very rich and very proud—he has an only daughter, and this niece, who he looks upon in the same light, if not higher. I have lived at his house, when at Nevis, since June last, and am a great favourite of his. I have told him I am as poor as Job; but he tells me he likes me, and I am descended from a good family, which his pride likes; but he also says, ‘Nelson, I am proud, and I must live like myself, therefore I can’t do much in my lifetime: when I die she shall have 20,000*l.*; and if my daughter dies before me, she shall possess the major part of my property. I intend going to England in 1787, and remaining there my life; therefore, if you two can live happily together till that event takes place, you have my consent.’

“This is exactly my situation with him; and I know the way to get him to give the most, is not to appear to want it. Thus circumstanced, who can I apply to but you? The regard you have ever expressed for me leads me to hope you will do something. My future happiness, I give you my honour, is now in your power: if you cannot afford to give me any thing for ever, you will, I am sure, trust to me, that if I ever can afford it, I will return it to some part of your family. I think Herbert will be brought to give her two or three hundred a-year during his life; and if you will either *give me*, I will call it—I think you will do it—either one hundred a-year, for a few years, or a thousand pounds, how happy you will make a couple who will pray for you for ever! Don’t disappoint me, or

my heart will break. 'Trust to my honour to do a good turn for some other person if it is in my power. I can say no more, but trust implicitly to your goodness, and pray let me know of your generous action by the first packet."

Nelson's love, however, did not prevent him from doing his duty; for he pleaded his own cause, and the vessels were condemned; but the Treasury, instead of sending thanks to Nelson, sent them to the commander-in-chief, who was opposed to Nelson in opinion.

"Had they known all," said Nelson upon this subject, "I do not think they would have bestowed thanks in that quarter and have neglected me. I feel hurt that, after the loss of health, and risk of fortune, another should be thanked for that which I did against his orders. I either deserved to be sent out of the service, or at least to have had some little notice taken of what I had done. They *have* thought it worthy of notice, and yet have neglected me. If this is the reward for a faithful discharge of my duty, I shall be careful, and never stand forward again; but I have done my duty, and have nothing to accuse myself of."

Now I will give you another letter from Nelson, and show you, that although he had the heart of a lion in war he was as meek as a lamb in love, and as affectionate as a *seal* to his relations: besides, you see, it gives a kind of insight into his very soul. His uncle had written to him, offering assistance in a pecuniary point of view, but not being very rich himself, the accommodation distressed him.

"Boreas, Carlisle Bay, March 9th, 1786.

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"Your kind letter of January 3d I received yesterday on my arrival here from Nevis. When I made application to you in November, it was, I assure you, not so much considering you in the light of a near relation, as of a sincere friend who would do every thing which was proper for the happiness of one who sincerely regarded and esteemed him, and whose friendship was pure, without any interested views in it; and had it not been for one sentence in your letter, viz. '*Your application has in a great degree de-*

prived me of my free agency, I should have been supremely happy ; but my feelings are too quick, and I feel sharply what perhaps others would not, so they gained their ends. That sentence would make me suppose that you thought I conceived I had a right to ask pecuniary assistance ; if you did think so, be assured you did me great injustice ; for I was convinced, that whatever you might be kind enough to do for me must spring from your own generous heart, and not from any shadow of right I could be fool enough to suppose I derived from our relationship. Relations are not always the people we are to look up to for doing friendly offices. O, my dear uncle ! you can't tell what I feel—indeed I can hardly write, or know what I am writing: you would pity me did you know what I suffer by that sentence—for although it does not make you act less generous, it embitters my happiness. You must know me, and consequently that I am guided by the strictest rules of honour and integrity ; and that had I not been more ambitious of fame than money, I should not most probably have been under the necessity of making the present application to you. No dangers or difficulties shall ever deter me from doing my utmost to provide handsomely for my dearest Fanny, for with the purest and most tender affection do I love her. Her virtues and accomplishments are not more conspicuous than her goodness of heart and gentleness of disposition ; and you will esteem her for herself when you know her.

“ Your readiness in giving, my dear friend, will not make me more anxious to receive ; for can I live without your putting yourself to the inconvenience of advancing me money, I certainly shall do it, for my disposition is not that of endeavouring to grasp all it can. The greatest felicity I can enjoy is to make her happy : for myself, I can care but little when she is considered ; and I could lay down my life with pleasure at this moment for her future happiness. After what I have written, you will believe my love is founded upon that strong basis which must have the appearance of enjoying happiness with her. I will endeavour, as much as my indisposed mind will let me, to answer all your questions about her son and herself.

"When Mrs. Nisbet married, Mr. Herbert promised 2000*l.* with her ; but as her husband settled in the island, where he died a few months after, it never has been paid. Mr. H. told me he had given, and should pay to the child. 1000*l.* when he grew up ; and that he should bring him up at his expense, and put him in a way of providing for himself. Mr. Nisbet (the gentleman whose wife went astray) was a brother. His estate, I understand from Mr. Herbert, owes, for money lent and attending it as doctor, about 3000*l.* currency ; but Dr. Nisbet dying insane, without a will, or any papers which were regular, has made this business rather troublesome, as Mr. Nisbet wishes to pay as little as he can help. Mr. Stanley, the attorney-general, whose property is next Mr. Herbert's, and who is his particular friend, has undertaken to settle it for her. She will not get much ; but it must, I conceive, make her little fellow independent.

"Her uncle, although he is a man who must have his own way in every thing, yet, I believe, has a good and generous heart, and loves her and her son very sincerely ; and, I have every reason to suppose is as much attached to me as to any person who could pay his addresses to his dear Fanny, as he always calls her. Although his income is immense, yet his expenses must be great, as his house is open to all strangers, and he entertains them most hospitably. I can't give you an idea of his wealth, for I don't believe he knows it himself. Many estates in that island are mortgaged to him. The stock of negroes upon his estate, and cattle, are valued at 60,000*l.* sterling ; and he sends to England (average for seven years) 500 casks of sugar. His daughter's fortune must be very large ; and as he says, and told me at first, that he looked upon his niece as his child, I can have no reason to suppose that he will not provide handsomely for her. I had rather wish that whatever he may do at her marriage may flow spontaneously from himself.

"I have not an idea of being married till nearly the time of our sailing for England, which I did not think was to be till 1787 ; but report says (which I don't believe, by

the by, but you can ask Mr. Stevens), we are to go home this summer ; but I thought it right to know every sentiment of my friends upon a business of this moment."

What between love and law, he was obliged to take to physic ; so that he flirted with the three black Graces. Any one may see by the following letter what effect it had upon his framework.

" Nevis, July 5th, 1786.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" This will be delivered to you by Mr. Suckling, who has done me the favour of calling here on his way to England. He appears much improved since I last saw him, and seems to possess a modesty of behaviour which must ever get friends and promotion for him.

" I wish I could tell you I was well ; but I am far from it: my activity of mind is too much for my puny constitution ; I am worn to a skeleton, but I trust that the doctors and asses' milk will set me up again. Perhaps you will think it odd if I do not mention Mrs. Nisbet : I can only assure you that her heart is equal to her head, which every person knows is filled with good sense. My affection for her is fixed upon that solid basis of esteem and regard, that I trust can only increase by a longer knowledge of her. I have not a line from either my father or sister. My brother just mentioned it in a cursory manner as you did. I hope you and your family are well, and ever will continue so. You have been my best friend, and I trust will continue as long so as I shall prove myself by my actions worthy of supplying that place in the service of my country which my dear uncle left for me. I feel myself, to my country, his heir, and it shall, I am bold to say, never lack the want of his counsel ; I feel he gave it to me as a legacy, and had I been near him when he was removed, he would have said, ' My boy, I leave you to my country : serve her well, and she'll never desert, but will ultimately reward you.' You who know much of me, I believe and hope, think me not unworthy your regards.

" But I beg your pardon for this digression ; but what I have said is the inward monitor of my heart upon every

difficult occasion. Bless you, my best friend, and believe me most affectionately,

“ HORATIO NELSON.”

“ William Suckling, Esq.”

It is nothing very new to say, that when once a man gets into love he is the most obstinate creature that walks the earth. Nelson was in love, and he married on the 11th March, 1787. I was there of course, and I saw Prince William Henry, his present Majesty,—God bless him! Yes, Nelson got married and I got drunk. It's a faint heart which never rejoices; and although I can say that I never boused my jib up on board since I entered the service, yet I must confess that now and then, in order *to do honour to the service*—that is, four times a year—once for Lord St. Vincent's action, or rather Nelson's bridge building (I'll explain that as I spin out my life), the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar,—I get as royal as a Scotch piper; although, when it comes to the last action, and which is in winter-time, I drink my first glass in solemn silence for the loss of my old commander, and then I give three cheers for the victory.

Nelson was married, and many a man in the service thought he was ruined; for I have heard those say who know nothing about the business, “that a man is never properly ruined until he is spliced:” but we feel, I think, as much disposed to gain high rewards when we know that the woman with whom we have shared our lives is to share in the honours; and although it may be true that in a desperate business of cutting out, a man remembers his wife and eight small children, yet few are the instances on record of a sailor proving himself deficient in courage *because* he was married.

Nelson thought that love is not to be drowned; but this opinion was written before his marriage.

“We are often separate” (this is written to the widow), “but our affections are not by any means on that account diminished. Our country has the first demand for our services, and private convenience or happiness must ever give way to the public good. Duty is the great business of a

sea-officer : all private considerations must give way to it, however painful. Have you not often heard that salt water and absence wash away love ? Now I am such a heretic as not to believe that article ; for, behold, every morning I have had six pails of salt water poured upon my head, and instead of finding what seamen say to be true, it goes on so contrary to the prescription, that you must see me perhaps before the fixed time. To write letters to you is the next greatest pleasure I feel to receiving them from you. What I experienced when I read such as I am sure are the pure sentiments of your heart, my poor pen cannot express : nor, indeed, would I give much for any pen or head which could express feelings of that kind. Absent from you I feel no pleasure : it is you who are every thing to me—without you I care not for this world ; for I have found lately nothing in it but vexation and trouble. These are my present sentiments—God Almighty grant they may never change ; nor do I think they will—indeed there is, as far as human knowledge can judge, a moral certainty that they cannot ; for it must be real affection that brings us together, not interest or compulsion.”

That was a happy ship, that Boreas. We had all manner of amusements on board, from play-acting amongst the officers to single-stick between the men ; and when the hurricane-months came on, we used to shelter in English Harbour, Antigua, and took to music and dancing as if we had been French skipjacks. We came home in June ; and Nelson was none the better for the heat of his love and the heat of the climate, so the Admiralty thought they would cool him again,—and by way of doing this, they kept the old ship at the Nore as a receiving vessel till the end of November, when she was paid off. Nelson did not relish this treatment, and he said out loud to the first lieutenant, the morning we went into the Medway, ‘ It is my firm determination never again to set foot on board a King’s ship. The ship was paid off, and the captain, after again going to court, went to Burnham Thorpe, and I went to Cawsand Bay.

CHAPTER VII.

Yes! the hope of return is the joy of a tar:

"T is his compass, his helm; 't is his guide and his ma.

"T is impressed on his bosom the moment he sails;

It shortens long nights, and it quickens light gales. — *Sea song.*

I DON'T know how it is, but it is certain that there is no subject a man likes to talk about so much as his misfortunes and his sweetheart: the first always raises his mind, and the second his heart; and that man is sure to be reckoned a friend who can listen to either.

I remember my sweetheart when she was young, handsome, sprightly, with eyes all fire, and with the sweetest lips that ever man kissed; but now Mr. Time has taken some few liberties with her figure-head; and I don't think she walks so well as she did, for she's got rather of a broken back, do you see, which makes her sail by the head; so it's very dangerous when she goes down hill, which I think we are all doing.

When Captain and Mrs. Nelson went down to their father, who, poor fellow! was very sick, and had been condemned by the doctors forty years before he was broken up, I got leave to go to Cawsand; and as I had saved my pay, and got a little addition from my new captain, that is *Mrs.* Nelson, I took good care to profit by former experience, and not to talk about gold-dust to any chaps who had not been to the coast of Africa; so I had it all sewed into my neckhandkerchief, excepting the present service store, which I tied up in the corner. Because, do you see, in those times, although we had long tails, we had no pockets, and I thought no pirate should take my cargo without cutting my throat. Away I went "with a light heart and a thin pair of breeches," as the song says; and I fell in with the Plymouth waggon.

"Good day to you, my jolly sailor," said the waggoner, "you must have been in foreign parts, I suppose, for you are as brown as a gipsy?"

"Just so, old Blowhard," says I; "and now, do you see, I am going to moor ship for a full due."

"Nay, sir," said he, "I don't know the place—we don't pass through it. There's Dart-moor, but that's on t'other road; and there's Moorfields, but that's t'other side of Lunnun; but Moreship—no, I never heard of it afore; it's nowhere hereabouts, and it's not near Plymouth."

"Yes, but it is," says I; "it's at Cawsand Bay."

"I say, master sailor," replied the old waggoner, "you bean't very mad, be you? or I can't let you get into the waggon, for there's a poor woman in there with her child."

"What, a sail!" said I; "then here goes, old boy, for an overhaul."

I jumped into the waggon; and there sure enough I saw a pretty young creature, with a poor little half-starved infant.

"What cheer, missus?" said I: "you seem here in the doldrums. Why, what's the matter? Is your husband dead?"

She held down her head, and I hardly knew what to say—I was taken right aback.

So I tried again. Although I don't think our voices are soft enough for consolation, yet, when I had turned my quid to cool in my pocket, and had given my mouth a slight heel to starboard, I thought I spoke more like a parson.

"If you're hard up on a clinch," said I, for I could not help talking like a sailor, "and no knife to cut the seizings, here's money enough to buy one, and set you on your legs again. Come, talk, that's a good woman—it will do you good. Nothing eases the mind so much as a flourish of the tongue, or a stiff glass; and I have often heard an officer say, when the watch on deck moved rather slowly, that it did him good to get rid of a good round oath. What's the matter, my cherub?" and I took hold of her hand, Lord bless you! as gently as if she had been a chap with the yellow fever. Well, I can't say I was much pleased when she withdrew it as if I had poisoned her, and commenced abusing sailors all in a bunch.

"Come, come, missus," said I, "we're not all as bad as you think us. If it's money you want, I'll give you as much as I can spare; but I'm going down to Cawsand Bay to get married, and must keep a little for ribbons, you know."

Well, at this she gave a sigh from the bottom of her heart, and says she, "I hope you will be more happy than I have been."

"Thank you, ma'am," said I, "with all my heart. Now let me stow your hold with some of the provisions of life: tell me, what's the matter with you?"

"I am starving, and my child is dying," she replied. "My husband—no, no, not my husband—has deserted me; I have not a farthing to buy me a crust of bread, and am tired of my life, and of the trouble I have undergone."

The waggon now stopped, and the waggoner brought a piece of bread and some beer for the poor creature. Lord! my heart was all alive, to think that a poor fellow who had to work so hard for his money, and to walk all his life though he had a waggon alongside of him, should have so much charity as to share the little he had with a stranger, whom hardly any other would have assisted. He pressed her very kindly to eat, saying, "There, my good young woman, cheer up, and eat: you really do look very fatigued; but don't disturb yourself—you may ride all the way to Plymouth, and I'll do all I can to assist you." At this I jumped out of the waggon, and, taking him by the hand, says I, "Who the devil ever made you a waggoner, when you have generosity enough for a sailor? You have all the credit, however, of doing what every man ought to do, and, as I am the richest man, I shall pay the piper."

After a good deal of disputing as to who should pay, we split the difference, each agreeing to bear half the expense; and that being arranged, I got into the waggon again. The woman seemed to be about two or three-and-twenty, with fine large dark eyes and hair, which, although rough and neglected, was long enough for one of the crew of old Benbow's barge. The child had a remarkable mole exactly between the two eyes, nearly as large as a sixpence, and was so plain to be seen, that any person who saw the in-

fant once might swear to her ever after. Although I always am mighty polite to the fair sex, and have such a wheedling tongue that I can come at the secrets of their hearts, yet this woman beat me ; I could not get any thing out of her, but that she was taking the child to her grandmother, who now had no children ; and that, although it wore her to death to take care of it, yet she did not think she could bear to part with her, for although her ruin, the child was now her greatest consolation. I asked her for her name ; this however she would not tell me ; and I could not get her to say one word in regard to him who had caused her sufferings.

As we neared Plymouth she became worse and worse.

"Pray, young woman," says I, "what are you going to do when you get to Plymouth?"

"Beg my bread from the man who has left me."

"But supposing he turns you away empty-handed?"

"Then I will die," she replied, "and put an end to all my misery in this world."

"That's all wrong," said I. "No sentinel can leave his post until he is relieved ; and the look-out man would taste the cat if he shut his eyes before his time was out. Then to commit a murder upon one's self ! Lord love you, I would sooner cut the throats of half the French nation than let daylight into my own, excepting in the natural way, which a man does when he is sleepy or hungry, and opens his mouth to gape or to eat. No, you must not talk of this, my good woman ; it is all wrong, depend upon it."

We had only another mile to go. So I untied my neckerchief, and took my knife out of my pocket, "Hold this end, young woman," said I, and I ripped open the magazine and took out some money. "Now, there's some shiners for you."

She looked at the money, and then at the child, as much as to say, "We need not part yet." But I shoved in my oar, and said, 'Take an old sailor's advice ; leave the young one with the grandmother, buy some new rigging, and go to service like a Christian, and don't be having a penn'o'rth of steps at Point or Stonehouse — that always leads to evil with you pretty creatures. If you get a place, and are

honest and hard-working, you will soon be able to look after the young one again ; and although your upper-works may be damaged, I think the steerage of your heart is all right and clear. There, put it in your pocket ; and if one sailor has injured you, another has relieved you ; so don't abuse us *all* as you did do."

She took my hand, and looking earnestly in my face for the first time, she blessed me. " Tell me," said she, " who you are."

" No, ma'am," says I, " fair play 's a jewel ; you keep your own name safe, and I 'll keep mine ; then there's no reckoning to be brought against us hereafter. I see enough thanks in your eyes to float a jolly-boat ; so good-b'ye, my little black-eyed cherub ! I say, old waggoner, here 's your money, and more to boot ; and the next time you see Ben Brace ——"

A hurried exclamation from the woman stopped what I was going to say. Away I started, and some one called after me ; but I thought every inch a mile until I was at Mutton Cove, then in the ferry round by Mount Edgecombe ; and with one kind of hornpipe step, I made a jump to father's door, and taking off my small straw hat, I gave three loud cheers and popped into the cottage. Mother seemed to have expected me, for I had written to her. Father was out fishing.

My tail was down to my stern-post. I had on a pair of ducks, tight round the waist, with enough canvass in the legs of them to dress an Irish family ; a pair of sailor's shoes, with about a yard of ribbon in each, for I never liked buckles ; and about as neat a jacket as you could see of a summer's day. At the moment I approached the cottage, I did not see a figure in black standing close alongside of me. All of a sudden, however, I saw her — I drew back — my knees shook — I opened my arms, and just as the dear creature began to grow dim to my sight, she rushed into my arms, and I kissed her. It was Susan. — Such a craft ! eyes like the lights that welcome us home when we first make the Lizard — figure, face, feet, — d — me if ever any one saw such a beauty ! I could see from the way she embraced me that she liked me : it was not

your sham-Abraham embrace,—no, no, it was a woman's coil when her arms are firm and her heart warm.

I retreated a step or two and gazed upon her: she was all life and happiness, and her wet, bright eyes sparkled with joy. Lord, how I looked at her! and she blushed and smiled and turned away her head, and then said,—“Oh! nonsense, Mr. Brace” (she gave me shore-rank, you see, and made a gentleman of me), “don't stare at me so.” Then she blushed again, and as I kissed her, I looked up, and sure enough there was the same snub-nosed attorney's clerk of whom I have spoken before, who had now set up in business for himself, as successor to his precious master, looking like a dying codfish, with the whites of his eyes turned upwards in astonishment.

“Hulloa! old boy,” said I; “I advise you to sheer off before I pour another broadside into your legal knowledge-box.”

“Susan,” said he, “can you listen to the words of this uncouth sailor, whilst I, a man of education, with the best house in the village—with comfort and respectability, offer to marry you?”

“Mister Attorney:” said I, “d—me, I'll turn ye to the right about if you attempt to clapperclaw her.”

“Surely, Susan,” he continued, “you are not so blind to your own interest as to unite yourself with a man whose profession is that of danger,—who will no sooner marry than he'll leave you, and who, when far away, will console himself for your absence in the embrace of another; whilst I must remain where you were born and bred. If you marry me you will be amongst your relations, and you will triumph over those who have taken every opportunity of traducing your character, by saying you corresponded with a sailor—a common sailor!—a-hem!”

“I say, Susan,” said I, “are you going to listen to that fellow's lingo? Why, his profession is to deceive, and he is endeavouring to make you his victim. Now I am all fair and above-board, and I never told a lie to any one in my life; and if old Tapes there said as much, it would be the biggest lie he ever told. There is my hand; there, there it is for your protection, and if you like it, say the word!”

Susan had been much flattered by the attention of the apothecary and the attorney, and in justice to human nature she had become a flirt. She loved me — women always like those who follow a desperate profession; they hate your fair hands and white-faced fellows, who seem to dabble in milk, and swallow chinam. My figure, face, and speech, were those of a sailor, and — although I say it myself — I was a handsome man. On the other side, I saw what was going on in her heart; she thought the malice of rival beauties would be thrown back upon themselves if she married the attorney, who was the most mischief-making fellow in the village. This had its due weight. Susan as the wife of a sailor and daughter-in-law to a poor fisherman, might be pitied; but Susan as the attorney's lady would be envied. Susan as pretty Polly might be caressed as a favour; but Susan as Mrs. Tapes would be courted and admired. Her mind balancing between love and pride, was controlled by discretion, and she neither took my hand, nor did she refuse it.

The attorney immediately proceeded to argue in favour of his client — himself; and on such a subject he was not likely to be cool. He considered me as sailors were, and *are* considered, — a kind of interlopers on the land; very good men to fight, get wounded or killed, receive small gains and no honour; then, when crippled, turned to the devil or the poor-house.

"Now, Miss Susan," he began, "I am sure you are too good a judge not to give each side an impartial hearing. The sailor there has stated his case, and concluded it by offering his hand. I shall show you the numerous objections to that not over-clean hand before I offer my own; and I am convinced that you will give a verdict in my favour. In the first place, by his own showing, his hand cannot be *yours*; it is his king's and his country's: and although I admit he could not serve in a better cause, yet it is obvious that, in his faithful service he must neglect you. Can the man who is freezing in the North Sea, or melting in the Indies, be protecting you at Cawsand Bay, your father and mother being dead?"

"I'm very sorry for that, Susan," said I.

"No interruptions, Mr. Sailor, if you please," said the land-shark. "The whole property is yours; it is not sufficient of itself to do credit to one of such acknowledged beauty; and you, from this, which is not enough, would be obliged to support him."

"I take the liberty of telling you, Mr. Tapes ——"

"No interruptions!" said he.

"Curse your 'ructions!" said I. "Here goes for the truth. You tell a most infernal ——"

"That is the man — *gentle*-man I cannot call him, Susan, — to whom you would listen. If in a case like this — an indifferent case to him, for we all know what a sailor's love is — he can outrage society in the way he has done, what pain, what anguish would it afford one so gentle and so mild as yourself, should his ungovernable rage break out and be vented on you! To a bad temper must be added lurking avarice and dirty habits. You see how warm he got when he heard your parents were in their cold graves, and you in comparative affluence. But look at that — which not even love could blind, — look at that huge swelling in his cheek!"

"It's my quid," said I.

"It will never get you a *quid pro quo*," said the shark; "for no one can be over-fond of a person whose gluttony distorts his countenance."

If I had understood the words at that time as well as I do now, I would have choked his luff with the tobacco; but not rightly understanding them, I only said, giving him a leer with my eye, "Maybe."

"Well, Susan," he continued, "in opposition to poverty, I have to offer affluence; to absence, constant affection; to a hammock, a house. I feel that your beauty might warrant an aspiration to a coronet; but I know that all the lords of the creation could not more honourably *sue* than I have done, or more bravely protect the prize should I succeed in capturing it."

"Ah, now you speak like a Christian," says I, "without being personal, and I can understand you. Of course you mean by capture, that you'll fight for the prize —

that's all right," said I, taking off my jacket ; " and we'll settle it in the turn of a capstan. Of course, you are going to fight the frigate before you plunder the convoy. Come, Susan, my love, you're mine safe enough — don't cry, that's a dear — there's no danger. I'll put him on the apothecary's list before he can say *law*."

By this time I had cleared for action, and tacked ship to face the enemy ; but he had made sail to his own harbour.

My father now returned from fishing, and his old eyes brightened up when he saw me ; and with many a hearty shake of the hand, he welcomed me back. On reaching the cottage I found Susan gone, and enquired what had become of her.

" She's gone home to look after her business," said mother : " and, Ben, don't be angry if I tell you that I don't think she'll ever marry you."

" Why not, mother ?" said I. " Then I'll give her a hail to-night, and see how the wind sets."

" Ay," said my father, " that's all right, Ben. You see, the lawyer and the doctor want to have a slice off her loaf. They tell her she's as beautiful as a boat ; and that one the like of her may do much better than to throw herself away upon such fellows as you, who are always leaving your women to fish for themselves. But, come along — sorrow is dry, and grief is no comfort ; let's make your stay agreeable."

I could not eat, I could not drink, — my heart was full of love for Susan, and revenge at the sneering insults of the lawyer ; so I wished the hours passed and night at hand, in order that I might go and visit Susan in her own house. I thought the night had gone in chase of the sun, and would never return until next morning. Well, I waited until half Cawsand had gone to roost, and until it was dark enough to walk about without being noticed. It was about nine o'clock ; away I went to Susan's, and I tapped at the door. Instead of Susan's opening it, a nice little girl came. " Is Susan within ?" said I.

" Not so free," said she, " until better acquainted. I wonder where you learnt manners !"

" On board a man-of-war," said I.

"Susan, Susan!" said *my* Susan; "let the gentleman in: it's Mr. Brace."

She led me to a clean and creditable apartment, which bore no signs of the trade, with the exception of some *flowers* in the window. Susan was seated near the fire, wearing rather a melancholy countenance. I don't think we sailors are good hands at consolation,—we are too quick; and if the woman does not dry her eyes in a moment, we are apt to call it blubbering, and become too impatient. Well, I walked up to her, and "Susan," said I, as I sat down by the fire, "which way is the wind to-night?"

"I am sure I don't know," replied the girl.

Whew! I was on the wrong tack; so I did like many greater men have done before and after me—started afresh with an indifferent remark. "I say, *Miss*, you must have had a comfortable berth of it here, and an easy time of it, since old Brown fitted foreign and got launched?"

Well, my eyes, how she did blush! and she looked all of a heap; her face became as red as a lobster, and a kind of confusion covered her.

"I really don't understand you, Mr. Brace," she replied: "I wish you would express yourself in such terms that I may come to a proper conclusion."

"Come to an anchor, Susan, first," said I; at the same time I took her by the hand. She looked in my face, and I thought I saw an expression as much as to say,—"*It won't do, Ben Brace!*" She was not so friendly as the last time we met. At last I thought she might take my freedom amiss, considering I had never spoke outright; so I began again. "Come, Susan," said I, "let's be all fair and above-board. I should like to be moored with you for life, and I have loved you ever since I saw you. I'll fight for you as long as I can stand; and here's every farthing I have in the world to make you comfortable. It's no pirate's money; it's all fair hard-worked-for wages, saved up for you and my father. Come, let's make a splice of it."

Well, this is the long and the short of it,—Susan was thinking about the lawyer; she got as white as a purser's

shirt on a scrubbing-day in the West Indies. She thought there was a great deal of truth in all that he said ; firstly, that if she married me, she would marry merely the name, because I was so wedded to the service and to Nelson, that to sea I should go, and that I told her. Then she saw all the assistance I should be able to offer was very small indeed ; and then she thought of the attorney's house, and being a gentleman's wife, instead of the daughter-in-law of a fisherman. Besides, there was Jane Mattocks, a pretty girl, who was her rival, and they had quarrelled ; and when two pretty women quarrel, they are more insincere in their friendship afterwards than two tigers : they will "dear" and "love" it, before each other ; but no sooner out of sight, than "jade" and "turnspit" are terms too flattering. She did not like to give me up, because I was a good-looking chap ; and yet she did not like Jane to call her a sailor's wife, for she was well to do in the world — she was the only baker in the place, and she had got a nice house over her head. She told me all this, and I grew desperate. "There," said I — "there, Susan, is my flipper ; will you have me, or not ?" She looked rather astonished, and did not answer. "Come, no shilly-shally," said I ; "either we marry this day week, or we part company for ever."

"I'm too young, and my aunt" (that was Jane's mother) "says I may do better."

"Well," said I, "many a time I have heard say, that 'the smoother the water, the more close are the rocks ; and when the sky is the clearest, the white squalls are the most likely.' God bless you, Susan, I won't tell a lie about the business, — I feel uncommon queer at leaving you, for I love you ; — God bless you, and make you a happy woman and a good mother ! but not a man in the whole world can love you more than I do."

"No, no, Ben, you shan't go — you shan't leave me for ever," she said, — "no, not for all the Janes in Cawsand Bay. But you must not hurry me — only fancy what a step it is for a young girl like me to take. Here my aunt and the attorney manage the business, which has increased since my father's death, and I cannot marry without the

consent of the former. They don't dislike you ; but they say that you will marry me to-day and leave me to-morrow. Now, Ben, listen to me : if you will take off that sailor's jacket, and put on a baker's dress, I'll marry you ; but if you follow the sea, you may marry Jane if you like. Make up your mind to-morrow—and now, good night !”

“ Give me a kiss,” said I.

“ Certainly,” said she, and we parted.

“ Whew !” said I, when I was clear of the port, and steering towards home,—“ what a craft ! Never saw so much flesh and bone so well put together ; she's as tight as a cockleshell, and from her figure to her cathead she shows as bluff a bow as a French frigate ; a clear run fore and aft ; and as for her quarters, my toplights ! a Dutchman on the Doggerbank is a joke to her. D— me if ever I felt so queer in my life.” A creeping came over my flesh as if the cook's tormentors were sticking in me. I must have been cursedly in love, for I never felt so dry in my life.

Well, away I went home, star-gazing whenever the clouds left them clear ; and just as I came to the door I gave something a kick, which rolled over and over. I took it up, for it was a basket, — I carried it into the house, and I soon found there was a live cargo.

“ What's that, Ben ?” said my mother.

“ A squeaker,” said I.

“ A pig ?” said she.

“ No — a child,” said I.

“ Put it out again,” said she, “ or we shall have some trouble come upon us, especially if it should die.”

“ Take it to the attorney's,” said my father ; “ leave it at the door, ring the bell, and be off.”

“ Let's look at it first,” said I.

My mother nodded, and we began to unpack the child, who had been stretched into a straw basket, something like the manner I once saw a peacock stowed on the top of a coach, with his tail sticking out, and just room left for his beak to get breath. I soon released the poor thing. The child had a black ribbon round its neck, to which was appended a card with the name Jane Tackle.

"Hulloa!" said I, "why is n't that the name of poor sister? If it be, she cannot be far off. I'm blest if I allow the child to go to the attorney's. Come, mother, you must take care of the baby." Mother at first did not like the business, and father talked of hard times; but I promised to set all that square, and expressed some hopes that we might yet recover the mother. "She can't be far off," I repeated, "for the basket was not here when I went a-courting Susan, and I have not been there more than an hour."

"She's a disgrace to us!" said my mother.

"The wicked hussy! My curse be on her!" said my father.

"Avast there!" said I. "If we were all to suffer according to our deserts, who would escape? — none of us. It's no use warring against our own flesh and blood. The world is ready enough to peck at a wounded bird which can't assist itself, and the more credit is due to them who shelter the houseless and who feed the hungry. Jane's my sister, I could not hate her if I would, for my own blood would run against me; and you must forgive her, mother," said I, "if she comes to ask forgiveness."

I don't value life a straw in regard to the fear of death; — I have faced him a thousand times — I have laughed at him; and it's not now, when the hull is going to pieces, that the captain will desert his ship. No, no; I don't want any Methody parsons to provision me for the long cruise we must all take: when the wind dies away, the ship must anchor, and he is the best man who finds the safest moorings.

I felt somehow all of a shiver, as if I had swallowed poison, when I heard father's curse. I thought it was wrong — I knew it was uncharitable.

"Come, father," said I, "take off the curse; you'll be sorry for it by and by."

"As you say," says dad, "we can never hope for forgiveness ourselves if we deny it to others: so I have done, and I forgive her."

The night was dark and rainy, and though I stepped out like a soldier, I got wet through.

A few nights after this (on steering to the cottage from "The Blue Peter," where I had had a jorum of grog, and had endeavoured to forget my cares over my pipe), just as I turned the corner of a house which was in front of mother's, I heard a low moan, as I thought, from some one in trouble. I looked about, for it was very dark indeed, and I did not see any thing at all. It was a bitter night, and the rain fell as if from a water-spout; the air was keen and cold, and the squalls came bustling along, more heavily laden with the dismal moaning. I called out, "What cheer, my cherub?" I got no answer. At last I determined to examine the premises. At the corner of the house was something like a large upright stone. On coming nearer and touching it, however, I'm blessed if it did not move!

I gave a start back, and I felt a cold shiver run through me, as if I had touched a dead corpse; then came again the same dismal moaning, and I got as much a coward as the two captains in Benbow's action. "Why," says I to myself, "Ben Brace, are *you* afraid, and Nelson's coxswain? — not a bit of it;" so I tried again. I went steadily along the house, when I distinguished a woman seated under the lee of the stone, in order to shelter herself from the inclemency of the weather.

"Hulloa, messmate!" said I, "you have got a bad berth of it here: why, you will be blown to pieces before morning."

"Leave me," said the woman, — "leave me to die! I have lost my child for ever; it has been taken from me; and I have waited here watching the door which encloses my infant, but is closed against me. And now, the sooner I die the better!"

I thought I recollected the voice; it was that of the poor forlorn creature who had come down with me in the waggon. Raising her up, for what with cold and hunger she could scarcely stand without support, I led her towards the cottage. My father opened the door; and immediately the old man rushed forward, he seized the woman by the arm, exclaiming, "Jane, Jane! do I live to see you again; to bless you my poor lost one — to comfort you!"

It was my poor sister Jane ! I never saw such a scene. There was she, dripping wet, lying along the floor ; she never spoke or cried — she was dried up by grief ; and there was father, the rough old fisherman, whose life had been one struggle against storms, now beaten, fairly beaten. My mother had raised Jane's head and placed it on her knees.

Whenever I see a fellow looking calmly on such scenes of affliction, or when, in the last rattle of death, the bystander is without a tremor, I always think he must be either a doctor or a brute. We get accustomed to death, to be sure, and that is the excuse for the former : and he would make but a poor surgeon who felt the wound he inflicted. But with us — we who are paid for being shot — why, it would ill become us not to feel for others.

Well, we got all hands to bed ; and the next morning I was as light as a cork, and skipped about like one of the figures we see in Punch's box. Before we piped to breakfast, I was on my road to Susan's, which was about a hundred yards from our house. She was up, and received me very kindly : she saw I was in high spirits, and asked me the reason.

"Jane's come back, Susan," said I. "Why, what — how you look. You'll come, I know, and see her, and be her friend, as you used to be."

"No, no, Mr. Brace," she answered ; "that I can never do. Think what the world would say."

"That sounds, Susan," said I, "like as much as to say, you never will shake hands with my sister again, — that you won't be her friend now that she most requires it."

"Certainly, Mr. Brace," said she, "that is what I mean."

"Then you never shall say that you are Mrs. Brace. I tell you what it is, Miss Susan" (you see I came the captain over her), "your heart is not in the right place, or you would feel for Jane, and rather endeavour to raise than to trample on her — So, good-by to you ! We part company from this moment : and hereafter, when that attorney has cheated you out of your person and your pro-

perty, you will think of the sailor — the coxswain of Nelson."

Then taking off my hat, I made her a proper bow, lifting up my left leg to keep the balance even as I bobbed my head and right hand: "Good-by to you, Miss Susan! I hope you may feel the satisfaction which I feel at this moment." I just took a last look, and I saw her lift her apron to her eyes, then run into her house.

"There," said I, as I nearly ran foul of the attorney on my way home, — "there's a clear coast for you to smuggle upon, old Tapes: but use Susan well, for she is a nice craft after all, and we part friends: so, tip us your flipper, and good luck to you both!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Now close 'longside of stout Mounseer,
 A British broadside pour'd;
 "Again," cried I, "boys, never fear,
 We've shot enough aboard.
 Helm-a-weather now; now lay her close;
 Yard-arm and yard-arm now she lies;
 Again, boys, give her t' other dose,
 Man shrouds and grapple, or she flies!" — *Sea Song.*

I FOUND I could not remain in Cawsand after this business; so I left my money with the old people, and returned to Nelson. It was on the 30th of January, 1793, that I left Burnham with my captain to join the *Agamemnon*: and now, we begin to get a-head in our history. During the time I had been down in the country, I had learnt to garden; for Nelson was very fond of that employment, and he was one of those men who never could be idle. He was always active, always alive, and never walked about with his hands in his pockets, as if he was feeling for his money, and wondering where the devil he was to find it. I had got rid of my sweetheart, and I did not care a fig when I heard, by a letter from Jane, a full account of the marriage of Susan with Tapes. I was digging potatoes

when I began to think of it, and, said I, as I turned up a whole parcel of the roots, "Women are like you, all the better for dressing; and not unfrequently when you have taken off the finest skin, you find the heart is rotten, — nay, sometimes the fairest blossom of you contains the most poison: I'm much better single." So in that way I argued myself into the conviction that whatever is, is right; and I shovelled away with a light heart and willing hand.

The Agamemnon was ordered to the Mediterranean, and made one of a fleet under the command of Lord Hood: and shortly after our arrival off Toulon, we were sent to Naples, with despatches for Sir William Hamilton.

Our business being concluded at Naples, we sailed to join Commodore Linzee at Tunis, and on the way we had a little bit of a brush with five sail of French ships — three forty-four-gun frigates, a corvette of twenty-four, and a brig of twelve guns. We only mustered three hundred and forty-five men; for we had left some behind in prizes captured off Toulon, and some we had landed. We soon got into action; but it was playing at long balls. The Frenchmen had the heels of us, and although we maintained a running fight for three hours with one of the frigates, we had nearly silenced her, when a change of wind soon gave her the advantage of escaping, and left us nicely riddled about the rigging. The other ships, which had crowded all sail to her assistance, did not renew the action with us; and we were left to repair damages, whilst they made sail and escaped together.

From Tunis we rejoined the admiral; and shortly afterwards we were despatched with a small squadron to co-operate with General Paoli, in Corsica. Here we had plenty to do — for Nelson kept us most actively employed: we were cutting out one day, landing the next, and so on during the whole time, until some misunderstanding took place between the Admiral and General Dundas about the attack on Bastia. Lord Hood then resolved to reduce it by the naval force alone, and he came himself with a large part of the fleet to Bastia. Nelson was the oldest captain employed upon this service, for the admiral had left his senior officers to blockade Toulon. The only men we had

from the army were a few artillerymen ; and we began the siege with eleven hundred and eighty-three soldiers, artillerymen, and marines, and two hundred and fifty sailors, — all belonging, with the exception of the artillery, to the fleet.

“ We are but few,” said Nelson, “ but of the right sort. Our general at St. Fiorenzo will not give us one man of the five regiments he has there lying idle.”

It was on the 4th of April, 1794, that we landed, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Villettes and Nelson. To be sure, we had work enough. We lugged the guns which we landed, on heights which at first seemed only to be got at by monkeys ! Nelson cheered us ; he was every where, his eye was on every one of us ; and, one and all, we put a willing hand to the rope. We were constant in our exertions. Nor were our enemies idle. They had borrowed fresh courage from our delay : they built new works, and repaired the old : night or day made no difference. We saw them at work ; and we perceived that one hour of wavering is a year to a besieged enemy. Their furnaces were in readiness ; and it was evident that they had the greatest confidence of success ; firstly, from our slender number, — and secondly, from their increased fortifications. But, as we advanced our works, the enemy gradually gave way, and on the 20th May, one thousand regular troops, fifteen hundred national guards, and a large party of Corsican troops, laid down their arms to one thousand two hundred soldiers, marines, and seamen. It was one of those bloodless victories which are gained by steady perseverance and undaunted courage.

The cartel which conveyed the prisoners to Toulon brought back information that the French fleet were all *à taunto*, and ready for sea ; and we were soon under weigh, in company with Lord Hood, for Hieres. We saw the French fleet off St. Tropez ; but the wind was so scant, that we were unable to get between them and the land, and cut them off : besides which their boats came out from Antibes and lent a hand to tow them within the shoals of Gourjean Roads, and placed them under the protection of the batteries on the islands of St. Honoré and St. Mar-

guerite. We looked at them like men who wanted an action: but it was of no use; we must have warped in, and that was impossible under the fire we must have sustained. They say that Lord Hood had planned an attack which would have been irresistible could we have entered the harbour.

We had just time to smell the enemy, when we were despatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi. Sir Charles Stuart commanded the land forces; and never was there a more gallant fellow in the British army: he slept every night in the advanced battery, and whenever a shot came, Stuart heard the whizz of it. Well, I remember that business! it was smoking hot; and we toiled through the day and night in dragging cannon, and in removing our sick. We had no respite from labour, — and out of two thousand men, we had the half in the hospitals, and the remainder volunteers for it. Ay, very few men know what it is to be fired at all day; melted with the heat, worn out with fatigue, and then to have the darkness robbed from them; hardly to know the comfort of sleep, to be nurses by night and soldiers by day, and then to get no reward when the toil is over.

It was at this siege, which terminated successfully, that Nelson lost his eye. A shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and gravel with considerable force in his face: some entered his eye, and ultimately blinded him; although at first he thought so lightly of the wound — if wound it could be called — as to laugh at it: he wrote to the admiral, and only allowed it to confine him for one day. I remember the nice work he made of it when he found his name omitted amongst the wounded; he did not conceal his mortification.

“One hundred and ten days,” said he, “I have been actually engaged at sea and on shore against the enemy: three actions against ships, two against Bastia in my ship, four boat actions, and two villages taken, and twelve sail of vessels burnt: I do not know that any one has done more. I have had the comfort to be always applauded by my commander-in-chief, but *never to be rewarded*; and, what is more mortifying, for services in which I have been

wounded, others have been praised, who, at the same time, were actually in bed far from the scene of action. They have not done me justice."

He was not the only one, however, whose services had been overlooked: many's the man who gets a pension for doing nothing, or because his father was born before him; whilst others are left to rot with the rank of lieutenant, who have seen service enough to make an inheritance. There was, not many years back, a man on that list who was lieutenant in Byng's action, and who never was promoted, because his admiral was murdered to satisfy party rancour. You might as well expect to make a marine-officer a bishop, as to forward those deficient in interest. Why, I should like to add up how many years I served and never got a warrant: I might have had one afterwards, but I preferred following Nelson.

Half the world never read of these actions, and why? Who sees the stars when the sun's out? Many have heard of all the great actions, and they have lost sight of the others in the remembrance of the most splendid. We lost plenty of men by sickness after we had taken Calvi: out of one hundred and fifty left in their beds, fifty lost the number of their mess. Lord Hood was now superseded by Admiral Hotham, and we had lots of irons heating in the fire. The whole of the Mediterranean was in confusion, and the French fleet, consisting of seventeen sail of the line and five smaller vessels, put to sea. The admiral was at Leghorn; but he was at sea in a moment, and we were not long before we caught sight of them.

I will here give a slight account of an action—it's hardly worth calling a victory; but it was a kind of oyster before dinner—it gave us an appetite for more. And, hang me, if I don't think there is a great similarity between oysters and actions: the more you have of them the more you want; and get as many of them as you like, they never satisfy your appetite.

Our fleet consisted of fourteen sail of the line English, and one Neapolitan seventy-four, and we mustered in all seven thousand six hundred and fifty men, and the Frenchman had sixteen thousand nine hundred. The first day

that we saw them, the 13th of March, 1795, they began tacking or wearing, getting into two lines, then into one, and such like ; but before long they bore up, and we were in chase of them in a moment.

One of their line-of-battle ships, the *Ça-Ira*, during the chase carried away her main-top-mast ; and Captain Freemantle, who commanded the *Inconstant* frigate, and who was far ahead of us all, darted at her like a dolphin after a flying-fish. He was one of the right sort, and so are all his brood : he began to rake her, and to harass her so confoundedly, that he gave us time in the old *Agamemnon* to come up with her. Nelson was never behind, you know, and he came up in good time, for the *Inconstant* was getting seriously injured. It was the height of bravery in Freemantle to stand it so long as he did ; and he would have remained a little longer, had not a French frigate come up, which, after Freemantle had hauled off, took the *Ça-Ira* in tow ; whilst the *Sans-culottes*, of one hundred and twenty guns, and the *Jean Bart*, seventy-four, kept within shot on the weather-bow. This was just the kind of attack for Nelson : he had no ship of the line within three or four miles to support him ; the *Inconstant* was done up for the day, and we had all the pleasure to ourselves.

The Frenchman, as we drew within shot, opened his stern guns upon us with an aim by no means comfortable ; hardly one shot missed us. But Nelson was watching how fast we gained upon her, not what we got from her : and on we went without returning a gun, until we began to be riddled aloft, and were within a hundred yards of her. " Now then, my lads," said he, " stand by, and don't be in a hurry. Hard a starboard," said he. Ay, ay, sir," said the master. " Square the cross jack-yard ; brail up the spanker." 'Twas done before you could say hulloa ! — and, my soul ! did not we give her a salute, Turkish fashion, which made them open their eyelids ! Then it was, " Avast firing ! brace up the cross jack-yard, out spanker : " and we stood after her again. We served her this trick for more than two hours, by which time we had cut away her mizen-topmast and sail, and the cross jack-

yard was telegraphing, French fashion, like their semaphores. The French frigate which had her in tow, hove in stays, and got the *Ça-Ira's* head towards the *Agamemnon*, and both frigate and liner opened their fire upon us. We stood on until we passed within pistol-shot, receiving all they chose to give us; and not being ungrateful, we did all we could to repay them with an equal kindness. When our aftermost gun was fired, round we came directly, touching the Frenchman up in stays; but it was no go: the *Sans-culottes* had wore, and some of the other ships were coming to rescue their wounded duck; and the admiral throwing out the signal to close, we made all sail to rejoin him, whilst our late adversary sent his compliments after us as long as we remained within gunshot. We lost seven men, but the *Ça-Ira* one hundred and ten.

At daylight, on the 14th, we got a north-west breeze, and the Frenchman kept a southerly wind. Our large friend had been unable to get up a new topmast during the night, although *we* have known a frigate at the conclusion of the war, after a hard day's work with an enemy of larger size all day, get up three jury-masts during the night and be in chase in the morning. She was about three miles distant from us, being towed by the *Censeur*, a seventy-four, the remainder of their fleet being about two miles from them. We were after the lame duck directly; and the French fleet made sail to rescue her. The *Censeur* cast off the tow, and we steered right between the two: we got it right and left, and we answered it from both broadsides. We could not miss if we would, — it was muzzle to muzzle, and blaze away, my hearties!

"There's for your grand nation, and sans-culottes!" said Bill Simmons, who spoke French like a Spanish cow. — "And there's for your soup meagre tureen!" said Tom Sykes, the man that afterwards, in the battle of Trafalgar, fixed the worm into a Frenchman's jacket, and hauled him overboard, shaking him off like you would a wad. It was "blaze away, my hearties!" until down came both their tricoloured rags; and Andrews, one of our lieutenants — a man, Nelson said, who was as gallant an officer as ever

stepped a quarter-deck — hoisted the English colours on board of both of them.

The rest of the French fleet escaped ; but had Hood or Nelson commanded — But, avast there ! we must not be throwing poisoned shot at any of our admirals ! The attack was daring ; the resistance, as far as concerns the two ships captured, desperate ; and bravery is more shown in the advance into action than in the noise and the tumult, when a man, although a coward by nature, fights naturally. I think in that business of Napier's who they call Cape St. Vincent, the gallantry of the action was in the determination to attack so superior a force ; for none but a really brave man would have ventured on so desperate an action. Some envious men say, the Miguelite fleet did not fight : no, they did not fight as they might have done, that is true enough ; but that cannot detract from the bravery of the English leader, who planned the attack, and who made it almost unsupported.

I have called our fight a *brush*, and I'll tell you why — Nelson called it only a *brush* — and here's his letter.

“ Agamemnon, Porto Especia,
March 22d, 1795.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ The event of our *brush* with the French fleet you will know long before this reaches you, and I know you will participate in the pleasure I must have felt in being the great cause of our success. Could I have been supported, I would have had *Ça-Ira* on the 13th, which might probably have increased our success on the next day. The enemy, notwithstanding their red-hot shot and shells, must now be satisfied (or we are ready to give them further proofs) that England yet reigns mistress on the seas ; and I verily believe our seamen have lost none of their courage, and sure I am, that had the breeze continued so as to have allowed us to close with the enemy, we should have destroyed their whole fleet. They came out to fight us, and yet, when they found us, all their endeavours were used to avoid an action. But accidents will happen to us as to others : a few days after the action we

BEN BRACE.

met with a very heavy gale of wind, which has driven the *Illustrious* on shore ; but we have some faint hopes she may yet be saved. Our prizes are almost refitted ; and to-morrow we sail for Corsica. I beg leave to trouble you with a letter for Mrs. Nelson, and have to beg you will give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Suckling, Miss Suckling, and all the family, not forgetting Mr. Rumsey and family. Believe me ever

“ Your most affectionate.

‘ HORATIO NELSON.’

I thought Nelson would have gone mad when he saw the French fleet steering away unpursued ; and when he heard the admiral say, “ We must be contented ! we have done well enough ” ! — “ Why,” said he, “ if I had taken ten sail and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been possible to get at her, I should never have called it well done. Ay,” said he, “ if I had commanded on the 14th, either the whole fleet would have graced my triumph, or I should have been in a confounded scrape.”

They made him a colonel of marines about this time ; I suppose, because he had commanded so like a soldier at Calvi : and he was pleased at this, for I have often heard him say, “ that he thought he deserved it.” We were all of us now more fit for the dock-yard than the Gulf of Lyons ; we were miserably short in regard to numbers, and although Admiral Man arrived with a squadron from England, consisting of five sail of the line, yet the French had a vast superiority as to numbers. We were more used to the work, however ; we did not mind shot, as Nelson said of us, no more than peas ; and we were very anxious to have another brush.

CHAPTER IX.

Should the foe bear in sight, and all hands call'd on deck,
 Don't think jolly sailors are cow'd :
 No — we'll teach them the old British flag to respect,
 And bid them defiance aloud. — *Sea Song.*

MANY's the tough yarn we used to twist on board the old Agamemnon, and very little time had we to sleep or play 'sling the monkey. Yet often when the moon shines brightly, and the ship slips through the water steadily and quietly, — like some men get through life, the ripple under the bows, and the bubbles as they pass, being something like the rebukes we meet with, and the pleasures which we have left far, far behind us, — some of us, grown careless as to rest from constant activity, would come to an anchor under the lee of the bulwark, or form a circle before the foremast, and spin out long stories of our actions.

I cannot stop here, however, to clear away the cobwebs of my memory, and tell the sprees of a seaman's life, for I am close on board the battle of St. Vincent.

After the *brush* we were sent to co-operate with the Austrian and Sardinian armies under General de Vins ; and we had to run away from our enemy, or we should have paid a visit to Toulon. We used to laugh at Nelson's running away ; but thus it happened.

We fell in off Cape del Mele with the whole of the French fleet, and, as we were only three ships, they made sail after us. Well, we turned tail and made sail for St. Fiorenzo, where we had left our fleet watering and refitting ; and for seven hours it was a toss up if we went to heaven or to prison ; but when the evening began to close in, the French made sail away. During the night Admiral Hotham managed to get out, and we went in pursuit of the enemy. The fifth day we saw them, but we were cursed with those Mediterranean calms, which, like a lady's face, is ready to show the smallest breeze which comes over the countenance. The French got in-shore of us, and we were becalmed about seven miles to the westward. We had,

however, brought on a partial engagement, and the Alcides, a seventy-four, struck ; but before we could get on board of her she caught fire. It was owing to some combustible rubbish, which is of no use on board a ship, where men fight like gentlemen, having been placed in the fore-top, and which accidentally caught fire.

Tom's yarn of the fire is sufficient to give a slight description of the rapidity with which a ship blazes when the rigging has been newly tarred ; — she was in a blaze in a second ! The whole of the foremost part seemed to burst out at once ; and although the boats of our fleet were out in a moment, and did their best to save the Frenchmen, we only saved about two hundred — the rest were either burnt or drowned !

For, when a ship has struck, do you see, we do as much to save the crew as if they were our own brothers, — we are only enemies whilst the flags are up ; but let one come down, and we offer a hand in a moment.

Although I have seen one or two glorious "blows up," yet I never could have believed that fire on board a ship, and taking place first of all aloft, could be so destructive. The wind, after this fire, began to blow right into Frejus — the enemy ran in and anchored, and we, with eight frigates, made sail for Genoa.

We soon stopped the trade of the neutral vessels, who were assisting the enemy. It was here that I first became acting-assistant to the captain's clerk, and managed to keep a copy of the letter-book. The little *man*, as some of his friends called him, had commenced a correspondence with the old Austrian general, and they expended more paper in preparing for war, than the marines fired away during the whole time in the shape of cartridges. We had to copy from ten to twenty letters every day, and this extra activity of mind almost wore Nelson out. He used to say, "Brace, I don't know which requires the most repair, the captain or the ship." The correspondence was all about fighting ; and all we got for our pains, was to write and write again. Nelson wanted the old Austrian to advance, in order that our fleet might have a secure anchorage at St. Nemo, from which place we could have secured the provisions for his army ; but it was useless.

About this time Admiral Hotham went home, and Sir Hyde Parker took the command. Nelson had written for a reinforcement of two line-of-battle ships and two frigates, in order to attack a considerable convoy in Allassio; but the new admiral, who did not know Nelson quite as well as Lord Hood did, instead of complying with the request, reduced the squadron under our orders to only one frigate and one brig. Old Vins was always too late; whenever he attacked a magazine or store, he invariably found it empty, and was told, that had he made the attempt a week previously, he would have made a grand prize.

At last the French gun-boats harassed the left flank of old De Vins' army at Pietra, and before he could remedy the evil a general panic ensued. The Commander-in-chief Vins gave up the command in the middle of the battle, pleading ill health, and (here's some of Nelson's letters for the rest)

"From that moment not a soldier stayed at his post — it was the devil take the hindmost. Many thousands ran away who had never seen the enemy, some of them thirty miles from the advanced posts. Had I not, though I own against my inclination, been kept at Genoa, from eight to ten thousand men would have been taken prisoners, and amongst the number General de Vins himself; but by this means the pass of the Bochetta was kept open. The pursuer of the ship, who was at Vado, ran with the Austrians eighteen miles without stopping; the men without arms, officers without soldiers, women without assistance. The oldest officers say they never heard of so complete a defeat, and certainly without any reason. Thus has ended my campaign; we have established the French republic, which but for us, I verily believe, would never have been settled by such a volatile, changeable people. I hate a Frenchman; they are equally objects of my detestation, whether royalist or republican; in some points I believe the latter are the best."

After this we went to Leghorn to refit, where we went into dock: it was not before we wanted it, for the hull was so riddled that we had secured it with cables.

Sir John Jervis had now taken command of the fleet, and we being patched up, joined him in St. Fiorenzo Bay. We afterwards took up our old station off Genoa ; and here it was that we first heard of Bonaparte, and his rapid successes : for, from the time he beat the Austrians at Montenotte, a fortnight had scarcely elapsed before the Court of Turin acceded to his *orders* of peace, and all the strongest places in Piedmont were placed in his hands. We managed to get hold of six vessels laden with cannon and ordnance stores, which, for a time, checked the French conqueror. Captain Cockburn, who commanded the *Meleager*, assisted at this business ; upon this occasion we drove the convoy under the batteries, silenced them, and took the ships.

It was in 1796 that the English evacuated Corsica, and Nelson's determined manner was the cause of each English merchant securing his property, which previously had been confiscated by the new government ; and on the 14th October we had managed to save public stores to the amount of 200,000*l*. The French, on the 20th, having landed near Cape Corse, on the 18th entered the town one hour after Nelson, who was the last man who had left it.

Nelson now hoisted his broad pendant on board the *Minnerva* frigate, commanded by Captain George Cockburn. I went with him, of course ; for I was his right-hand valet, his deputy clerk, his coxswain, and his oldest follower. We were bound to Porto Ferrajo, and we did not get there without another *brush*. The fact is, that we were never out of the way of old Death, and he always had his greedy paw out to catch some of us.

We fell in with two Spanish frigates, the *Sabina* and the *Ceres*, and of course we attacked one of them without loss of time. Nelson said one Englishman was worth two Frenchmen, and consequently six Spaniards. We engaged the *Sabina* for three hours, and we sent one hundred and sixty-four men to their long account. The captain, one Don Jacobo Stuart, was the only officer left ; he fought like a Briton, and, as his name was Jacob Stuart, there was no wonder in that.

We had just got the prize in tow, when the *Ceres* hauls

up for a dust: we cast off the prize and tackled her, and in half an hour she had received quite enough of our shots, and had hauled off, when two line-of-battle ships and two frigates, all enemies, hove in sight. It was now no time to be making prizes, so we made sail; the enemy recaptured their ship; we got to Porto Ferrajo in safety. The whole naval establishment was withdrawn from Elba, and we then (early in 1797) sailed for Gibraltar with a convoy.

It was on the 13th February that we communicated to the admiral, Sir John Jervis, that we had seen the Spanish fleet off the mouth of the Straits. Nelson was instantly desired to hoist his broad pendant on board the Captain, seventy-four, commanded by Captain R. W. Miller; and by the time I had stowed my hammock in the nettings, I looked aloft on board the admiral's ship, and there was the signal to prepare for action. I had seen that so often, that I did not want the signal-book to teach me.

At daybreak the next morning we caught sight of them being then in the order for sailing in two lines. The morning was dark and hazy, and at half-past six the Cul-loden made the signal for five sail in the south-west quarter: at eight the signal was flying for "prepare for action." It wanted no officer to stimulate the men; they were warm for the business; and although La Bonne Citoyenne made the signal that the enemy's fleet consisted of twenty-five sail of the line, whilst we had only fifteen sail of the line, four frigates, a sloop, and a cutter, there was not a man fore and aft the deck that did not think some of the Spaniards would be seen in Spithead with an English flag on board of them.

When I first saw them distinctly, I began to rub my eyes and look at the commodore: he was all alive and merry; he walked quickly up and down the deck, rubbed his hands, looked again, and seemed just as pleased as if he was meeting an old friend. When I looked out of the main-deck port, however, and saw a four-decker of at least one hundred and thirty-six guns, six three-deckers of one hundred and twelve, two eighty-fours, eighteen seventy-fours, making in all twenty-seven sail of the line, with ten frigates and a brig, I began to think that we were in for a

bloody business, out of which we could never retreat, and only to be won by such men as Jervis and Nelson.

The ships first telegraphed by the Culloden were, when first discovered, separated from the main body, which was bearing down to join the separated vessels. We first endeavoured to cut off these five ships; but the main body of the fleet becoming too near for this experiment, we formed into "a line of battle ahead," giving up the chase and preparing for a serious business.

Every man in the navy goes through some awful scenes; but there is nothing like the dead quiet on board a man-of-war before the fight begins. When every thing is ready—and we, God knows! are ready enough to do our duty—when we get tourniquets and devilments to clap on the wounded, and when we look about us amongst old and tried shipmates, then it is that a curious kind of cold feeling runs through the bravest of us all. There we are, standing to our guns, with nothing to divert the thought; and then it is that a thousand ideas occur of home and all our dearest friends.

The morning was foggy, and this concealed our numbers from the enemy, who believed, on the authority of an American, that we had only nine sail of the line: but Admiral Parker with five sail of the line had joined, and so had we and the Culloden, between the admiral's boarding the American and the American communicating with the Spanish admiral, one Don Joseph de Cordova. At daylight we were in compact order close together, whilst the Spaniards were straggling: the look-out ship of the enemy not getting her signal heeded, hoisted another, saying, that our fleet consisted of forty sail of the line. This puzzled old Cordova, and frightened the whole fleet; for it was on the authority of the American that we were so inferior that, instead of going into Cadiz as Cordova intended, he had been, indeed in search of our fleet, in order to crush us by his overpowering force. When, however, he came to find by the false signal that we were nearly double his number, he made a cross and blessed himself.

At about twenty minutes after eleven the admiral made the signal to pass through the enemy's line. Owing, how

ever, to the press of sail he carried, the enemy could not form in regular order before we were close aboard of them ; so that Troubridge, in the Culloden, had hardly fired at the enemy's headmost ship to windward, before the rest of our ships came up, passed right through their straggling line, cut off nine ships from the main body, and then tacked. We then poured broadside upon broadside into the nearest ships. That part of the Spanish fleet thus completely cut off, formed on the larboard tack, with the intention of passing through, or to leeward of, the English line : but we gave them such a warm salute, and received them so heartily, that they soon tacked and stood off, and did not appear in the action until their comrades had lost the day.

Having disposed of this division, the admiral made the signal to tack in succession (I remember it all as yesterday, because I was placed to assist the signal officer), and accordingly the headmost ships did tack. But Nelson, who was stationed in the rear of the British line, and who had the better opportunity of remarking all the enemy's tactics, observed the Spaniards bear up, in order to join their scattered ships, and likewise to form their line again. This was a well-planned manœuvre ; but Nelson was alive to the consequences in a moment, and therefore, without any hesitation, he disobeyed the order to tack, and *wore*, directly he had passed the Spanish rear. In executing this bold and decisive evolution, the commodore found himself alongside of the Spanish admiral, in the Santissima Trinidad, the four-decker I mentioned before. She was big enough to swallow us up. I'm blessed if I don't think she might have stowed us in the main hold, and our trucks would not have come above the combings of the main hatchway ! — but this was a trifle. We had, besides this monster, the San Josef (she that many a time has had an English admiral's flag on board since) of one hundred and twelve guns ; the Salvador del Mundo (we have seen her keeping guard, I think, in Plymouth, for these last five-and-twenty years) ; the San Nicholas, eighty, and the San Isidore, seventy-four. This was odds against us ; and Troubridge gallantly made sail to support us in the very unequal fight. We two fought the whole batch of them for more than

half an hour. The roar of the guns, the immense smoke, the cries of the wounded, the orders of the commodore, took away from any of us, if we had it, the reflection of the unequal contest. Cheers after cheers followed — we were determined to conquer. I have heard some great man say, "They can conquer who believe they can." Up comes the *Blenheim*, commanded by Captain Frederick ; he passed between us and our enemy, and poured a tremendous fire into the *Spaniard* ; it caused the *Salvador del Mundo* and *San Isidore* to drop astern, and there they found, pushing up to our support, the *Excellent*, Captain Collingwood, who took the liberty to break some of the cabin windows, and to spoil the paint and fligree-work abaft. Both ships struck ; and Collingwood, who thought some one else might pick up the wounded birds, pressed on to support us (for we were getting it rather warmly), when the near approach of Admiral Parker, with the *Prince George*, *Orion*, *Irresistible*, and *Diadem*, determined the Spanish admiral to relinquish his attempt of rejoining the ships to leeward ; and he made the signal for the main body to haul their wind and make sail on the larboard tack.

At this time we were hard at it with three first-rates. The *San Nicholas* and two other vessels were firing into us, and we were, of course, returning them as much iron for use as we could spare. It was then that Collingwood, who never forgot a friend or spared an enemy, said that the *Blenheim* was a-head disabled, and the *Culloden* was crippled astern of us ; he therefore came up, man-of-war fashion, took the mainsail off the *Excellent*, as if he were going to dine with the admiral, and, passing within ten feet of the *San Nicholas*, poured in such a broadside as nearly to send her to old Nick — after which, I believe, she was named — and passed on to the *Santissima Trinidad*. The *San Nicholas* luffed up, — and well she might, for it would have slewed any stern, — and fell on board the *San Josef*, and we placed ourselves close alongside of them, making three abreast, thus giving both of them the advantage of our generosity, whilst only one of them could return it. We were properly disabled ; every rope was cut to pieces, the fore-topmast was gone, and we had not a shroud

left to support a mast ; but we had still a little head-way. Nelson ordered the captain to put the helm a-starboard, and we ran on board the *San Nicholas*. "Boarders, fore and aft!" was the cry. You may see the picture in the Painted Hall, with the admiral in a *cocked-hat* heading the boarders.

Captain Berry, who had been the commodore's first lieutenant, led the way, and was the first man on the enemy's mizen chains. The spritsail yard of the Captain having passed over the enemy's poop, got foul of the mizen rigging, and thus steadied us. Berry was not a second without a supporter ; for Lieutenant Pearson, who commanded a detachment of the 69th regiment, then doing duty on board as marines, gallantly followed the noble example, and passed into the *San Nicholas*. One of the soldiers broke the upper quarter gallery window and jumped in ; and the commodore and myself were soon at his heels, having lots of our crew close behind us.

We found the cabin-doors fastened ; but what's a door to an English sailor but a place to pass through ? which we did in a second, without using the hinges. We pushed on to the deck, and there was our gallant shipmates in possession of the poop—the Spanish ensign down, the ship ours. The commander of her was mortally wounded, and Nelson was just in time to receive his sword. Every precaution was instantly taken to secure the prize ; but we did not do it in quiet.

The stern of the *San Josef* was directly on the weather-beam of the *San Nicholas* ; and the enemy opened a brisk and destructive fire upon our men, now on the upper deck of the prize. Nelson saw that to remain was fatal ; he must either go on or retreat. He only knew how to do one ; although the other shows the good officer, they say, more than the advance.—More men were sent from the Captain : "Follow me," said Nelson : "Westminster Abbey or victory !" Berry assisted the commodore into the main-chains, and I was alongside of him. "Forward, my lads!" was the cry : but it was no use to hurry, for a Spaniard popped his head over the quarter-deck rail, and bellowed out that they surrendered. The commodore

leapt on the quarter-deck ; and there we were sure enough, without any poking or piking, the conquerors of the San Josef. The Spanish captain delivered his sword ; for the admiral was below severely wounded, — indeed, dying.

There, on the quarter-deck of this noble ship, did the commodore receive the swords, which were handed to me ; — to *me*, — think of that ; and I bundled them under my arm as if they had been broomsticks. And what cared we then for the fire of twenty-two sail of the line which were still firing at us ?

Admiral Jervis, whilst we were boarding, placed his ship, the Victory (Lord ! how my heart stops whenever I mention that ship !), in the lee-quarter of the rearmost ship of the enemy, the Salvador del Mundo, and poured in such a broadside, that the Spaniard, seeing the Barfleur coming up to pay him equal attention, struck her colours and was captured. Our other ships in the van continued to press the Santissima Trinidad and her supporters, which formed the rear of the enemy ; but the ships which we had separated from their fleet in the morning having got together, bore up and seemed inclined to renew the action. Sir John Jervis made the signal to heave-to, and then formed a strong line to protect the prizes and the disabled ships. The enemy, as they approached, fired a few broadsides, and then left us to walk off unmolested with the captured.

Thus ended that famous action, in which we upheld the daring character of British seamen. It was an action well calculated to give to Spain a lesson not easily forgotten, of her total inability to meet the English on the high seas ; for it is said that out of a council of war held by the Spanish admiral as to renewing the action (for he could then, had they been equal to us in bravery and skill, have changed the fate of the day), only two officers — namely, the captains of the Pelayo and the Principe Conquistador — voted for a continuance of the battle. Sir John Jervis shook my gallant captain by the hand on the quarter-deck ; and although he never mentioned him in the despatch, yet in his private letters he was not backward in his praise.

CHAPTER X

The action was dreadful ; each ship a mere wreck ;
Such slaughter few sailors have seen :
Two hundred brave fellows lay strew'd on the deck. — *Sea Song.*

IN the month of April 1797, Nelson, now Sir Horatio Nelson, was made an admiral, and shortly afterwards shifted his flag from the *Captain* to the *Theseus* ; and I went with him. He had offered to promote me to a warrant ; but I said, "No ; if I'm promoted, I shall not be able to follow you from ship to ship : and I trust, your honour," said I, "that after all the work we have seen together, from the *Mosquito* shore to the battle of St. Vincent, you won't allow me to be separated from you."

"No, Brace," said he, "if you like to remain my coxswain, you shall ; and I dare say I shall be able to provide for you somehow ; but it is not every one I find so willing to serve me, or to trust in my endeavours to serve them."

The *Theseus* was one of the ships concerned in the mutiny. You have heard about that, I suppose ; or if not, you had better read "*The Breeze at Spithead*," by Captain Glascock, for he got all his information about that from an old one at Greenwich : and if you want to know how they hang a man in the navy, you will be more of a villain than a Christian if you don't drop a tear over the execution in the "*King's Own*," by Captain Marryat.

But I must "go on," as they say to the engineer in a steam-boat. Our crew soon became tractable enough. Nelson knew how to govern men, and they were soon thought how to obey him : but owing to this awkward business I did not know all the men for a long while after I joined. I was half coxswain, half steward, and was more in the admiral's cabin than in the fore-top, without it blew fresh,—and then I never could keep my fingers clear of the reef-points.

It was on the 3d of July, and a fine night, that the admiral, who had the command of the inshore squadron off Cadiz, took with him the Thunder, a bomb-vessel, and the barges and launches of the squadron, in order to blow some of the cobwebs out of the houses of Cadiz. We anchored the Thunder about two thousand five hundred yards from the garrison; and Mr. Boyne, a lieutenant of artillery, began to show his skill: but it was soon found that the mortar was so injured from former services as to be useless. The Goliath, Terpsichore, and Fox were ordered to protect the bomb-vessel. The Spaniards, seeing the Thunder withdrawing from the attack, sent out a vast number of mortar gun-boats and large armed launches, in order to cut off her retreat, and to capture her before the above-named vessels could come to her assistance. The admiral seeing their intention, immediately gave orders for our boats to face about and attack them: and we did not require a second call—we went at them in the real good old style. They hardly dared to face us, but fled under their batteries, like so many frightened birds when a hawk heaves in sight: but we were sure to be where the danger was greatest; and in all my service, which has been a little more than a sailor's in peace-time, I never got into such a situation as we did that night,—the boarding the San Nicholas was nothing to it.

The commandant of the Spanish gun-boats, a gallant fellow, one Don Miguel Tyrason, singled out the admiral's barge, in which we had only ten men besides myself, the admiral, and Captain Freemantle; and in which was John Sykes, as gallant a sailor as ever shared his grog with his messmates. Don Miguel ordered his boat to be placed alongside of ours; and, as you may suppose, we did not object to the meeting, although she was a powerful craft and manned by twenty-six stout-looking chaps.

This was a hand-to-hand-business. Don Miguel led his men bravely: and, to give them the credit they deserve, they were worthy of such a gallant commander. Nelson parried a blow which would have saved him from being at the Nile; and Freemantle fought like himself, fore and aft, both boats. It was a desperate struggle, and once we

were nearly carried. John Sykes was close to Nelson on his left hand, and he seemed more concerned for the admiral's life than for his own ; he hardly ever struck a blow but to save his gallant officer: twice he parried blows which must have been fatal to Nelson : for Sykes was a man whose coolness gave him full scope for his science at single-stick, and who never knew what fear was any more than his admiral. It was cut, thrust, fire, and no load again,—we had no time for that. The Spaniards fought like devils, and seemed resolved to win from the admiral the laurel of his former victory : they appeared to know him, and directed their principal attack towards the officers. Twice had Sykes saved him, and now he saw a blow descending which would have severed the head of Nelson. In that second of thought which a cool man possesses, Sykes saw that he could not ward the blow with his cutlass—the situation of the Spaniard rendered it impossible. He saw the danger ; that moment expired, and Nelson would have been a corpse ; but Sykes saved him—he interposed his own head !—his commander was so beloved, that his old follower (for Sykes was with us in the Captain) sought the death he could not otherwise have averted. We all saw it—we were witnesses to the gallant deed, and we gave in revenge one cheer and one tremendous rally. Eighteen of the Spaniards were killed, and we boarded and carried her ; there not being one man left on board who was not either dead or wounded.

“ Sykes,” said Nelson, as he caught the gallant fellow in his arms, “ I cannot forget this.” But my wounded shipmate only looked him in the face, and smiled as he said — “ Thank God, sir, *you* are safe.”

Your heroes have the best hearts ; if gratitude could have repaid Sykes, Nelson had done it: he would have made him a lieutenant ; but the wound rendered him for ever unfit to benefit by the power and disposition of his admiral. He died soon after, but was always a little queer here in the head, and no wonder, for the blow would have split the skull of a negro, or a cocoa-nut ; and Sykes was beyond the help of the noble hero he had saved.

This was no *brush* ; it's very rarely that men are op-

posed hand to hand and sword to sword ; and you may guess how fierce was the fight, when the Spaniards resisted until not a man remained untouched amongst them. I can only finish this story in the words of Admiral Jervis, then Earl St. Vincent :—“ Rear-Admiral Nelson’s actions speak for themselves—any praise of mine would fall very far short of his merits.” We made two more attacks afterwards ; but the Spanish admirals, Mazaredo and Gravina, warped their fleet out of the range of shells ; and it’s no use frightening old women in nurseries. Up to this time Nelson seemed to have been protected either by some angel, or John Sykes ; in all the actions in which he had fought he had never been shot ; his eye was done by the sand, and not by the iron ; but we can’t all be invulnerable.

Lord St. Vincent now despatched us on the 15th July, the same year, in order to attack Santa Cruz in the Island of Teneriffe. We had with us four sail of the line, three frigates, and the Fox cutter ; and on the 25th, at half-past five o’clock in the evening, the squadron anchored in the roads. It is an odd-looking place that Teneriffe ; and you have all heard of the Peak, I suppose, which some people have seen a hundred and sixty-one miles off.

The landing-place is a small mole. When the trade-winds are strong, it is almost impossible to land without some caution and some good management ; but when the wind comes from the vaileys, the sea is quiet and the mole secure.

We had no soldiers with us, for we counted that the seamen and marines would be sufficient. There was a regular plan, of course : Nelson did nothing without a plan ; and his intention now was to land on the north-east side of the bay, between the fort and the town, take the fort, and then recommend the town to surrender. Owing to the strong winds and currents, the first attempt failed ; for we never got near the place until daylight, and then we thought it prudent to return. I say we, like the newspaper writers, because we were all concerned in the business, although neither the admiral nor myself were of that party ; but Troubridge commanded, and he would have

done it as well as any man if fortune had favoured him. There is more in fortune than in valour. Every man has a certain portion of courage, and in action no man has time to be a coward; besides, the hatches are fastened down, and there is no retreat.

Having failed in the first attack, was no reason why we should fail in the second. It was on the 24th July, at six in the evening, that the signal was made to prepare. The admiral this time commanded in person. One thousand seamen and marines were to be landed from the different ships under the command of Troubridge, Hood, Thompson, Miller, and Waller; and at eleven o'clock the boats left the ships in six divisions, and proceeded to the attack. Nelson had that night met his captains at supper on board the Seahorse, Captain Freemantle, whose wife was on board; and when the men, one hundred and eighty, had been placed on board the Fox cutter, and the rest distributed in the different boats, the captains took their different situations; Freemantle and Bowen remaining with Nelson, who afterwards took the lead, and gave directions as to the attack. I heard Nelson say: "This plan is so simple, it cannot be misunderstood. I have directed them to land at the mole, or any where—for their way cuts the great square—and then act as circumstances require."

It was about half-past one A. M., when we were all close to the mole, that the Spaniards discovered us; they rang their precious alarm-bell, and lights and fires were blazing in a moment. "Cast off the tow-ropes in the boats!" said Nelson. "Now, my lads! three good cheers, and hurrah for the first on shore!" We made some noise, as you may suppose, but they made more; for they opened a fire from about forty pieces of cannon, from all directions; and as for the musketry, it was as regular as the roll of a drummer.

"Give way in the boats!" shouted the hero, as we darted by them in order to be first on shore. The gallant fellows heeded not the musket-balls, the round, grape, or canister, any more than the ladies mind sweetmeats during the carnival at Naples. "Pull away, forward!—well done, abaft!" was the cry in each boat; and one would

have supposed it was a race who should be first at the grog-tub, rather than in an hospital.

It was as dark as pitch, and we could not tell the mole-head from any other place, the firing was so continued, and from all quarters at once. Most of the boats missed the landing-place, and were carried on shore by the surf, which stove them all, and left the men without any retreat.

The admiral hit the right place—and when was he wrong in his life? Freemantle, Bowen, and Thompson, with about half a dozen more boats, were with us. We landed—stormed the battery at its end—carried it, although defended by five hundred men. We spiked the guns, and stood by for a rally into the town; but the enemy fired too well. What man can beat a Spaniard behind a wall? We dropped in all directions. The citadel directed its fire upon us; and every rascal who could pull a trigger, and sit on a house-top, did so, to our great loss. So many fell, that we could not advance.

Nelson was on the point of landing from his boat, when a shot struck him on the elbow, and he fell back in my arms. His son-in-law, Nesbit, covered the wound directly, and I tore up my shirt to make bandages for my gallant admiral. From that time I did not hear the roar of a gun, the noise of the surf, or the whizz of a shot. I thought of nothing but saving Nelson. Nesbit bound up the arm with silk handkerchiefs; we laid him in the bottom of the boat, and then pushed off, for we had grounded. Nesbit pulled the stroke-oar, and I steered the boat, keeping close under the batteries, in order to avoid the tremendous fire. Nelson hearing Nesbit speak, desired he might be placed upright; but nothing could be seen but the flashes of the cannon, and nothing heard but their eternal roar, until one loud piercing cry almost silenced the tremendous noise, or was heard above it. It came from the Fox cutter: one shot which had struck her under water, had sunk her, and those who never feared death from the shot or shell of the enemy instinctively shrunk when he approached in that unexpected form. In vain did we stretch our arms to their assistance,—the exertion was almost useless; the men, armed, and having a great proportion of ball-cart-

ridges, sank in spite of their exertions, and the sea rolled in without a mark to show where ninety-seven brave fellows had been swallowed up. Eighty-three were saved in the different boats. Nor was Nelson idle ; his personal exertions contributed much to render his wound more dangerous and painful.

"Steer, Brace, for the first ship," said Nesbit.

"It is the Seahorse, sir," I answered.

"Take me to my own ship," said Nelson ; "I would rather suffer a thousand deaths than alarm Mrs. Freemantle when I can give her no information of her husband."

"A chair for the admiral" said his son-in-law, as we neared the Theseus.

"No !" said Nelson,—"the side ropes ;" and as he jumped up the side unassisted, he gave orders for the boat to return to the Fox. "Shove off," said he, but I was by his side on deck—"Shove off, and tell the surgeon to bring up his instruments ; for my right arm must come off, and the sooner the better."

In the mean time, Troubridge, who had missed the mole, landed close to the citadel ; his boats were all stove and knocked to atoms in a moment, and the water did no good to the ammunition in the Jollies' pouches ; but those marines fight better the more the odds are against them. They are a gallant body of men, and have always been foremost in every battle, and the best behaved in any disturbance. To them, England is much indebted for many victories ; and although we do call them "Jollies," why we don't mean it as any thing personal ; no ! rather that they are a jolly good set of fellows, foremost in every danger, and ready to serve and to save both their friends and their enemies.

Captain Waller, of the Emerald, landed with Troubridge : they collected the men, and pushed on to the great square, according to the previous directions : for they could do nothing against the citadel, as the ladders were floating about the bay. Hood and Miller made their landing to the south-west ; and at daylight, Troubridge mustered in the great square about eighty marines, eighty pikemen, and one hundred and eighty small-arm-men :

these were all who survived of the many who had made good their landing. It was proposed to try the citadel without the ladders; but the streets were crowded with Spaniards advancing upon them; nor were they deficient in field-pieces. The enemy were in thousands; whilst our brave fellows, amounting only to two hundred and forty, stood ready to face them, and eager to begin. But this was no time for fighting; that Russian fellow, Suvaroff, who called lead a fool, but steel a wise man, could have effected nothing against the increasing and already overpowering numbers.

Troubridge ordered Captain Samuel Hood to take a flag of truce to the Spanish commander, Don Juan Antonio Gutierrez, a gallant fellow, and one who knew what bravery was. Hood was desired to say that the town would be fired in five minutes, if our men were not allowed to retire unmolested to their ships, the Spaniards finding boats for the embarkation. The terms were agreed to; the wounded were taken into the hospitals, and the lucky fellows who had escaped untouched regained their own ships to tell the sad tale of their failure, but also to recount the bravery of the officers and men who had shared in the gallant attempt.

In that night we lost, in killed, wounded, drowned, and missing, two hundred and fifty men; and that determined fellow Bowen was killed, and his pockets picked, and Freemantle and Thompson both wounded. They kept Bowen's gold seals and chain and his sword, in the Town-house at Teneriffe, until 1810, when they returned them to his brother, the commissioner.

No sooner had Nelson been examined by the surgeon, than immediate amputation was recommended. I undressed him myself, and laid him down on the cabin table, making him as comfortable as possible; but the wound was one which must have been dreadfully painful, for the bone was shattered to pieces, and I never remember to have seen such a fracture before.

"I'm ready," said Nelson; "so, doctor, despatch. You know your business too well for me to fear or you to cause useless pain."

I thought I should have dropped when I saw the first cut. I watched my admiral's face, for I had mixed some wine and water in case he should require it; and I knew how grateful is the least drop when a wounded man calls aloud for drink. I have seen men at the gangway who took no immediate heed of the boatswain's mate's cat as it whizzed through the air and fell with cutting violence on the bare back; I have seen men receive dozens without the slightest murmur: but when they ask for water, if it is not brought, I have heard how pettishly they continue the demand;—and that's the reason I always keep my throat moist, for I do not wait to allow my curiosity to get the better of my comfort.

Nelson's face never moved. His lips, it is true, were closely pressed together; but that, I have been told, is a strong sign of determination. His cheeks were pale from the loss of blood; and he appeared faint from the exertion of rescuing some of the men whom he saved from the Fox. Oh, how I felt when I saw the long knife, bright as the binnacle-lamp, dazzling all around! Nelson looked at it; and in a moment it was down to the bone, right round and round the arm. He did not flinch from this, but just before, when the surgeon drew the skin back, he looked up. Then came the saw; and I'm blessed if the carpenter, sawing off the heel of a studding-sail boom, could have set to work with more coolness than the doctor. Off fell the limb—Nelson's good right arm.

In taking up the arteries, the surgeon, in his haste, took up a nerve, and bound the two together with a piece of of silk thread; and this caused the devil's own torture for months after, but at the time did not increase the suffering.

No sooner was the limb dressed—the knives removed—the assistant-surgeon despatched to look after others, than up gets the admiral: and “Brace,” says he, “get some paper and write down the despatch as I tell you.” And it's as true as the Gospel; he told me every word, and held the paper, and read it himself, to see that it was all correct, although it was eleven o'clock at night before it was finished.

Nelson became so ill after this, that he was obliged to leave active service. He retired, on his arrival in England, to lodgings in Bond Street, I being his servant on shore, as I had served him on board. Upon his recovery, he went to court; and I shall not forget his answer to the King when he was presented, for I heard him relate the anecdote myself.

"You have lost your right arm," observed the King.

"But not my right *hand*," replied Sir Horatio, "as I have the honour of presenting Captain Berry. And besides, may it please your Majesty, I can never think *that* a loss which the performance of my duty has occasioned; and so long as I have a foot to stand on, I will combat for my king and my country!"

They now gave him a pension of 1000*l.* a year; and I copied out the memorial which it was necessary or customary to present. It is here: —

"To the King's most excellent Majesty, &c.

"That, during the present war, your memorialist has been in four actions with fleets of the enemy, viz. on the 13th and 14th March 1795, on the 13th July 1795, and on the 14th February 1797; in three actions with frigates; in six engagements against batteries; in ten actions in boats employed cutting out of harbours, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns. Your memorialist has also served on shore four months, and commanded the batteries at the sieges of Calvi and Bastia. That during the war, he has assisted at the capture of seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers of different sizes; and taken and destroyed nearly fifty merchant vessels. And your memorialist has actually been engaged against the enemy upward of one hundred and twenty times; in which your memorialist has lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded and bruised in his body. All of which services and wounds your memorialist most humbly submits to your Majesty's most gracious consideration."

This was useful to me; for when I came to apply for Greenwich, I copied Nelson's memorial word for word.

adding to it the Nile and Trafalgar; and I got my cocked-hat and breeches, with the allowances, and a small pension. It is a different thing to work headwork and to work handwork, as the black fellows say; but no one ever heard me grumble at what my admiral justly earned. No, no; thank God! I loved him too much for that; and the Greenwich men calling me Old Nelson is quite compliment enough, when added to the pay, pension, and allowances. Why, if they made me a lord, what should I do?—and old Susan my wife, only to think of her in a satin dress, and called my lady!—Hah, hah! And now I think of it, why should I not be a lord, when I have been in every action with Nelson, just as well as some of the talking people, who get peerages for words, and not for deeds?

Well, they gave the admiral snuff-boxes, and freedoms, and such like; but although I stood behind him the whole time when that cross squinting fellow Jack Wilks addressed him, yet I'm blessed if, when he spoke of all these services, he ever mentioned *my* name, once, not once!

It was on the 13th December that the surgeon who attended him turned him out of the doctor's list, and told him he might go on deck again. He returned thanks in St. George's church for his recovery, and applied for a command all at once. The parson preached the first, and the Admiralty granted the last; and they ordered him to hoist his flag on board the Vanguard; and on the 1st April 1798 we sailed with a convoy for Spithead. Before going to my new ship, however, I went to Cawsand.

CHAPTER XI.

D'ye mind me, a sailor should be, ev'ry inch,
 All as one as a piece of the ship;
 And with her brave the world without off'ring to finch,
 From the moment the anchor 's a trip.
 As for me, in all weathers, all times, sides, and ends,
 Nought 's a trouble from duty that springs:
 My heart is my Poll's, and my rhino my friend's;
 And as for my life, 't is the king's. — DIEDIN.

I THINK the man who goes through life without any bad luck, is like a piece of wood in a stream where there are no shallows or rocks—all goes smoothly, but there is a great sameness: now when a man is up in the clouds one moment and down at the bottom of the sea the next, he has some changes and chances. One thing I have learnt, and that is, to keep my temper. Nothing ruffles me now; I can hear of ships sinking with their crews on board, without cursing the lubberly captains; and I can listen to a good murder without jumping up and asking for Jack Ketch: and this I hold to be the great secret of life. The man who is never quiet, never contented, is always a disagreeable fellow to himself and to his neighbours; but many of the shots which wound others whizz harmless by one like myself, who takes every thing as it comes, with a cheerful countenance and forgiving heart.

What's the use of getting in a rage, or of being uncomfortable before the mischief is at hand? No, no! wait patiently; the danger always grows less as we calmly look it in the face; as a hill seems a precipice at a distance, but becomes merely a gentle slope when we are near its foot; but if a man's inclined to be frightened, it is like objects on a rail-road—it's a speck one second and a waggon the next. Now, he who keeps his temper sees all clearly and distinctly before him; he is neither flustered into fear nor blinded by anger. It is well for me I kept mine, or I should now be snug enough under water with my throat cut.

When Nelson began to recover, which was just after

Duncan's victory, and whilst England was in a riot all day and a blaze all night, I got leave to visit Cawsand; and I started in a small vessel which sailed from the Thames. The skipper refused to take any passenger but myself, although two or three offered. A precious fool I was for my pains! because there are such things as French privateers; and let me tell you, no set of men are more desperate, except Deal boatmen and smugglers. She was a sloop called the Nancy of Plymouth, and we started on the 12th of October. At those times it used to blow a good deal; but, somehow, I think latterly the seasons are altered.

Away went the Nancy with a flowing sheet; and I remember passing by this hospital, and wondering, as I stood on the deck of the sloop, if I was ever to moor ship in Greenwich reach. I was as sound as a roach then; I had never been hit: and I was as proud as a prince. Away we went, and I used to sing the old ditty —

“ When I sail'd from the Downs in the Nancy,
My jib! how she smack'd through the breeze.”

The skipper lugged out the long bottle of brandy, and we got as jolly as lords or judges: the little vessel behaved beautifully, and we ran through the Downs with a spanking breeze on the quarter.

Although I considered the coxswain of the *Theseus* and under secretary's assistant to Sir Horatio Nelson quite as good as any skipper of a coasting vessel, — yet I could not keep my hands off the helm, and whenever any thing was to be done I was in the way to do it. One night, just as we were about Brighton, I think, and the skipper was getting a cloth or two in the wind, he says to me, “ Fear-nay,” says he (you see I shipped a purser's name), “ don't you think an active fellow like you might make money enough to get a vessel of your own, and be independent, instead of brushing about after other people?”

“ I beg your pardon,” said I, “ Mr. Skipper; but I don't *brush* about after other people: I belong to Admiral Nelson.”

“ Well,” said the skipper, “ he is a great man, no doubt;

but he will never make an independent man of you. Only think what it is to be independent, — to clap your hands in your pocket and find plenty of money, and to know where to get more ! Why, according to your account, you have been at sea ever since 1770, and now we are in 1797, making twenty-seven years, and you have not got enough money, I'll be bound, to jingle on a tombstone."

"That's wrong," said I, as I unstowed my magazine : "here's five-and-twenty pounds ; and I have more due for prize-money."

"Well, what's that ? You know you make it like horses, and spend it like asses ; and then you are obliged to slave for more. Besides, what can be worse than being at the mercy of any capricious character ; to be seized up to the grating — to be flogged like a boy — to be placed in a black list — to work, ay, worse than any negro in the West Indies ? And, after all, what do you gain ; — twenty-five pounds ! Now, you are just the lad I want : you are quick, brave, intelligent, a seaman, and a sailor : you might do for a lord-chancellor, for you can speak Spanish after a fashion, and can write a good hand. If you will serve me, I'll serve you ; and so let's have another glass, and we'll see if we can't make a bargain."

"Much obliged to you, sir," said I ; "but I might have been a baker, and lived like a lord at Cawsand Bay, only I could n't leave Nelson ; so let's drop the subject, for I am sure if you and I talk for ever, we shall never agree on this point."

To tell the truth, I did not like my man : he was, indeed, one of the surliest-looking fellows I ever knew. He had great quickness of manner, and was one of the stoutest-looking men alive. His crew were more afraid of him than of a press-gang ; and whenever he was displeased, he used to say, "I'll ship you on board a man-of-war ; and then you will know what slavery is, under the glorious name of 'British Sailor,' 'Lords of the Ocean,' 'Bulwarks of England,' and so on." Well, I looked at him, and I could not help thinking that I had some recollection of his features : but although I looked and looked again, and turned over the log-book of my memory, yet I could not recall to my mind that I had

ever actually seen him before ; still I was quite convinced that his features and his manner were not unknown to me.

When people are only half-drunk, they are either excessively knowing or confoundedly quarrelsome. Now I was never the latter ; because I had had quarrelling enough with the Spaniards to last me until the admiral recovered his health ; and as to the former, why I must say, that I was just in that humour to bet I could have counted the number of patches on the skipper's counterpane without a mistake ; and, therefore, giving a very knowing wink with my right eye, I remarked that I hoped it was not personal, but that I once did remember having seen a man nearly as ugly as himself in the West Indies.

"Where, and when?" said he.

"I think," said I — and you know how we sailors remember dates, — "I think in the *Badger*, in 1779, in Jamaica."

He looked at me — right through me ; and his eyes, neither blue nor black, seemed on fire ; they then became rather dead, as he seemed to retrace in his memory scenes long since almost forgotten. Then followed one of those slight twinges which crawl over the countenance when a man tells a falsehood. I soon found that I was on the wrong tack, for this fellow could have pounded me to a jelly ; so, by way of making it up, said I, "Why, now I come to think of it again, you are not like the man I thought."

"Come, Master Fearnay, no more of this, if you please. Who this fellow was you are kind enough to think resembled me, I neither know nor care. Will you join my craft?"

"Much obliged to you, sir," said I, "but I've already told you I cannot: I belong to the Royal Navy, and I'm proud of the service ; I like it better than carrying merchandise from London to Plymouth, and back again."

"Merchandise?" said the skipper with a sneer: "now, Mr. Fearnay, do you think I look like a man to carry carpets? Look here," he continued, opening a panel near his bed-place, and discovering a regular stand of arms — short cutlasses with baskets round the handles, pistols, tomahawks, and every other invention for cutting throats, breaking heads,

or shooting sailors. "Why, do you think that a man of my build and power goes groping along the coast for cod-fish, or that I could have a comfortable house on shore by such like twopenny tradings?"

"Umph!" said I, giving him a wink, and running my forefinger across my throat; then pointing to the sea, I looked at him and said, "Ay?"

"No," said he, "not exactly that. No, not a pirate, but a little given to this" (touching the brandy-bottle); "some of the right sort — real Guernsey, and so on. Do you twig?"

"Smuggler," said I in a whisper, as if I was afraid the very deck should overhear me.

"That's it, as right as a trivet — only a little risk, you know. Besides, I have lots of companions in Cawsand, and that is the place where I run the cargo."

"Why, you have got none on board now, have you?" said I.

"Not yet," he replied; "but before we get in I shall have enough to supply half the parliament-men in England."

"Where do you find it," said I.

"Will you join?" said he.

"No," said I; "Nelson never liked your profession."

"Nor I yours," said he, "although I once belonged to it, when—but no matter; listen, and mind, you've a man, and a desperate man, to deal with. You heard me refuse to take a score of those long-tailed coated gentry who wanted a passage, and yet I took you at half-price: I saw you had a little of the devil in your composition, and I took a wonderful liking to you. Now pay attention: I am going to place myself in your power; but remember, you are in mine. I could soon drown the secret with you. — Ah! you need not look at that locker; you nor no one else can open it now. Last voyage, when I had another vessel, we were opposed in running our cargo, and the mate was killed; I fired, and he was revenged; — he was just your build, but he had more heart. The scuffle was long and serious; for a man-of-war's boat happened to be at Cawsand, and joined the custom-house officers. It was the first time we were

obliged to fire. We should have been taken, had not my twelve men ——”

“Why,” said I, interrupting, “twelve men ! Why, you have but two and a boy !”

“I dare say,” he continued, “we shall find fourteen before we arrive. But listen. We lost our cargo, which we had already landed. Owing to the fishermen, who are our friends, being apprehensive that a discovery was certain, they left us ; and we fought as gallantly as men can fight who fear transportation or a man-of-war, or perhaps a gallows. I got on board my craft again, leaving the mate dead ; and having lost the cargo, I became more desperate and more cunning. I have now two vessels concerned in the traffic. You will find that when I make the Eddystone, which I shall do after dark to-morrow if the breeze last, that a fishing-boat will show me two lights in answer to my three : she has a small cargo on board, with a hand or two to spare. We shall shift all this, and be in Cawsand Bay before day-light. We have confederates in readiness.

“Young man,” he continued, “you had better make up your mind, for out of this vessel you never stir, excepting to be transported. Now mark me, you are concerned with us. Here you are, and we are going to run the cargo. You will assist — or by G—— !” —— (and he made the sign I had made to indicate a pirate). He looked me steadfastly in the face — “My life,” said he, “is in your hands — my security is in your death ; it is but a toss overboard, and the waves will roll over William Fearnay as quietly and as secretly as they roll over the custom-house shark I decoyed last year. You think we are alone, but there are others who hear, and who are nearer than you expect.”

This was a stopper over all : he had me safe enough, I felt ; and I heard a low whispering close to me. I was now snugly entrapped by a man who owned to having shot one man to revenge his mate, and drowned another to revenge the loss of his cargo.

“Answer !” said he, “will you be one of us, or will you swim like a stone for it ? Don’t say we took you un-awares. Here, freshen your draught with the Frenchman’s

water of life, and when you have imbibed some of their spirits, perhaps we may find you a man of more mettle. I went too far before my danger sobered me ; now I am alive to my own situation, and I'm not the man to be trifled with. Answer !”

“ Sir,” said I (for I saw that civility was the best policy, and if his danger had sobered him, my apprehensions had roused my cunning), “ I will answer you plainly and straightforward.—You ask me to become a smuggler ; — I will not. You tell me that I shall sink by myself, or swim with you : that is optional only with you ; and in this world and the next you will answer for it. But I cannot see the necessity of your adding another murder to your numbers. You have decoyed me here ; you have endeavoured to wean me from the service I most like,—and you seem ready to murder me because I refuse your offer. Stop, sir, and hear me out. I see the determination already taken in your mind, but I'm not the man to look on with a white face. No ; I have faced Death too often to be afraid of him ; though I'm not fond of paying him a visit before my time. I will not join you, I repeat : but by all that is in heaven or hell I swear that I never will be a witness against you ! I now leave it to you to trust me, or to consult your better safety by my death.”

“ Safety !” said he : “ What is my danger ? You could be no witness against me. What have you seen as yet ? Go look in the hold, and see if there is a tub of liquor, or a pound of tobacco. I tell you I don't care for your death a straw ; and when I die, I'll turn a black face on the world. Your own folly would be my best argument to get rid of you. There is but one man alive,—perhaps he is not alive,—that can hold up his hand against me. There, give us your flipper,—Good night ; and to-morrow we'll talk over the matter again. It gets late, and to-morrow night we shall not close our eyes.”

Saying this, he threw himself upon his bed ; and I, overcome by what I had heard, and alarmed at my own situation, was glad to lay my head upon my pillow and ponder on what I had heard. I turned restlessly in my narrow crib. To join such a man was impossible,—to

escape was impracticable. Of his crew, I had only seen two,—yet those two were of that brawny cast, that I should have been a baby in their hands. Oh! were it possible to write what passed in my mind that night! I could not sleep; I kept my eyes fixed on his bed-place: strange as it may appear, the skipper slept—as if his life had been creditable,—as if no secret monitor, no small still voice, as the parson says, witnessed against him. He slept soundly—he never turned or spoke.

At the first dawn of day I was on deck. The cool air refreshed me much; and I hardly felt the Channel mist which allowed this cursed vessel to glide along unperceived by our numerous cruisers. Of course, I had resolved, in the event of our being boarded, to try to escape in the scuffle; but no vessel hove in sight. Once, when I was steering, we saw a brig, and I edged towards her; but it was a Smyrna-man, making a run for it. The tide of ill luck had regularly set against me, and I had nothing else for it than quietly to meet the danger I could not avoid.

We breakfasted together. The skipper was in high spirits, and talked of his future life of affluence. It appears that he had been well educated, and having an inquisitive mind, soon became, as he stated, far above his situation. He spoke dictionary lingo, and was a kind of long-togged sailor—more of a gentleman than a seaman; yet he understood his vessel well, and worked her properly. The day passed slowly away, and by seven o'clock in the evening it was pitch dark, and the easterly wind rather high and cold. We were now near Torbay, and the skipper made his only preparation, which was to have the lanterns all ready. We went down into the cabin a little before eight: he placed the brandy-bottle upon the table, and began directly at me.

“Well, young man,” said he, “I have not bothered you all day, in order that you might undisturbed consider my offer.”

“There’s the Eddystone on the starboard bow!” said one of his men.

He looked at me searchingly; then said to the man, “Keep her off a couple of points, and give us a hail when

it bears south-west. I have been successful in every trip but one," he continued, turning to me, "am now well to do in the world, and want such a fellow as you, young, hardy, and resolute, to make one or two trials first, and afterwards to take the sea business, whilst I retire to manage it on shore.

"It's a life of danger; but that danger has its charms. A woman is not worth winning when there is no opposition to the love,—and a fortune is more satisfactory when it is made by perils, and in defiance of the law. A stolen kiss is always the sweetest. Your gentleman, who inherits his fortune which his father has toiled for, cannot feel the glow you have felt when the enemy has struck his colours, and the prize has been gained by courage and hard work.—Come, this is no time for long words; here's my hand upon it: serve me well this night,—be my friend—my companion in danger, and you shall not go unrewarded."

I shook my head.

"What!" continued he, "you refuse? Consider, before your word is passed;—again, will you join me?"

"No!" said I, "never!—never!"

"Then this night," said Tackle coolly, "you shall see, if there is a dust, how easy it is to grin through bars, and afterwards to visit foreign parts at the King's expense."

"There's a vessel on the larboard bow, sir!" said a man who had been placed to look out.

The skipper went forward, and I jumped into the cabin in order to get a pistol: but I could not open the locker; so I whipped a large sharp-pointed carving-knife inside my shirt. I was on deck before the skipper came aft; and I managed to stow away my only defence in such a manner as to baffle his quick eye, and to hinder its wounding myself.

CHAPTER XII.

Different deaths at once surround us ;
Hark ! what means that dreadful cry ? — *Sea Song.*

THE vessel which we had seen was a fishing-boat, under easy sail on the larboard tack ; and I shortly saw two lights on her deck, as if by accident, and not shown as any signal.

"That's her !" said one of the seamen ; and our three lights were held over the lee quarter ; then two were shown by her more boldly, and we shot up alongside of her and hove-to.

"Hooker, ahoy !" said the skipper.

"How are you in the Nancy ?" was the reply. — "All right from Cawsand," continued the stranger.

"Any news from the islands ?" said the skipper ; and this finished the discourse, consisting of many private signals, which no one knew but the two skippers, and consequently a mistake was impossible. The boat of the Nancy was out in a moment, and very shortly afterwards the skipper of the hooker came on board. He shook his worthy partner by the hand, and they both went into the cabin. The conversation was in a low tone of voice, which gradually grew louder, and I soon found that I was the object. I sat by the companion ; for the man who ought to have been at the helm had lashed it a-lee, and had gone below to prepare for the ensuing struggle.

"I really don't know," said the stranger, "how we can manage him ; but of this we are certain, that we can contrive, if we are opposed in the landing, to get rid of him without much trouble, but otherwise he might blow the gaff upon us."

"He promised me he never would," replied the skipper ; "and there is something all fair and above-board about him. Let's have him down and try him again."

"I'd rather he did not see me, so as to swear to me," said the first.

"Never fear, Jacob ; we can always find means to stop my oath. So let me call him ; we must not bear up for the next hour with this breeze — we should be in too soon. But as our talk is over, we will run down within a couple of miles inside the Eddystone, and at one make a run for it. Tapes said that he did not imagine we should meet with any opposition ; and he and his men are all ready to assist. What a precious old scoundrel he is !"

"I think he cheats us finely, Tom," replied Jacob. "But wait awhile ; they say, when rogues fall out, honest men get their due : it won't be long before we give him a receipt in full."

This bit of intelligence about Tapes did not pass me unheeded. "I'll recollect you, my fine fellow, some of these days, depend on it," thought I to myself.

"Let's have Fearnay down, Jacob, and see what we can make of him ;" and he called me.

I went down, and seated myself against the foremost bulk-head, only keeping my right side towards them, for I was fearful that the carving-knife might be discovered. They pushed the brandy towards me, and I took a strong south-wester to keep the cold out and to twist me up a little.

"Now, Fearnay," said the skipper, "will you join us or not?"

"No," said I, "I won't! I feel much obliged to you for the offer, which I dare say might turn out beneficial to me ; but I have followed Nelson ever since he was entered on board a man of war, and I could to-morrow be a warrant-officer in the service. I refused promotion to be always near him ; and it is not in any ill-will, but for the same reason, that I refuse your offer."

"Well," said Jacob, who was a stout square-built fellow, with more fire in his eyes than would have blown up a magazine, "that, I must say, is all fair and above-board. But you know that now we are in your power, and you in ours ;— will you swear never to give evidence against us under any circumstances ?"

"No," said I; "I will not promise that."

At this both of them leaped up in a moment.

"Stop," said I; "don't be in a hurry. As far as regards the unlawful trade you are concerned in, I swear by Heaven that I will never give any evidence against you."

"And what other evidence could you give?" said Jacob, as he looked through me, for his eyes no man could face—he kept them fixed upon me.

"None," said I, "*as yet*: but circumstances unconnected with this affair might arise."

"I say, my lad," continued Jacob, "you are a bit of a sea-attorney, and before half-an-hour is over your head, your throat will not require a neckerchief. Either this minute join us, or, by the piper who played before Moses, you are a dead man in five minutes! Come, Tom, this fellow is not to be trusted."

"I think not," said the skipper: "he is just the man for us, if he could be trusted."

"I never yet," said Jacob, "made much of such fellows." He retired towards the companion, and took out of his bosom a pistol, which he very deliberately cocked. "Stand aside, Tom, and we'll have an enemy the less in a moment."

"No, no," said the skipper, "no murder yet: we may run the cargo without blood; and if he swears never to appear against us in this affair, that's enough for us. Put up your pistol, Jacob;—we have use enough for that."

"Why, you must be mad!" said Jacob. "The noise of running the cargo will arouse Cawsand in a moment. It must not be: either we must take him over to Guernsey, or we must save him the hazard of being false to us."

"No," said the skipper, "say no more about it; I have him fast. Let's to work. You say the vessel is so deep, that it would take us half the night to change the cargo; so let us run it in your vessel. The wind seems edging round, so that you may yet be out before daylight, and the tide will float you off in an hour after we run her ashore. Take Fearnay with you, and I'll run in and anchor, and get ready."

I can't say I felt very easy under this arrangement; for

Jacob was not a man to stand upon trifles, and he seemed rather glad to get me so much under his control. I jumped into the boat without saying a word, because I knew that one word in opposition would be useless. So I hugged my left arm pretty close to my side, and having said a bit of a prayer, I made up my mind that if any blood was spilt, mine should have a companion.

The night was murky and misty, and a small drizzly rain made it darker and more damp. The Nancy bore up for the anchorage. About a quarter of an hour afterwards we did the same. The boat, for so the hooker might be called, was exactly the shape and rig of a Cawsand fishing-boat, and she might have laid alongside of any of them without suspicion. She was however evidently of a better build; and when she felt her canvass, she walked along through the water at a great rate. I stood on deck watching the land with great anxiety; and my heart beat quickly when I saw Cawsand Bay, and remarked one bright light in a house I could not mistake—it was that of the attorney.

The Nancy was at anchor close to the shore. It was dead low water, and the sea was harmless, for the projection of the land rendered the bay smooth. Jacob had been talking to his crew, and had mentioned the plan to be pursued. One of the anchors, to which a strong hawser was bent, was cleared, and before we touched, and about a hundred feet distant from the shore, was let go, and the hawser paid overboard. As the vessel advanced, she grounded easily in the mud, and instant preparations were made to land. There were one or two men ready on shore, and the kegs, slung in couples, were thrown out, and conveyed to the shore by the crew, some of whom had jumped overboard, the water not being higher than their waists. Those on shore slung the kegs over their shoulders, and ran along to Tapes's house, where they were to be deposited.

Jacob never landed, and the tide had begun to flow before I thought of my own welfare. I kept a bright lookout, and availing myself of a moment's inattention of Master Jacob, I was over the bows before he could get any of his crew to stop me. He called to those on the mud to seize me; but I was not bound to Guernsey then. I stepped

over the water like a fisherman ; and when the first person put his arms out to hold me, I came the eel over him, and slipped through his fingers before he could clutch me. I did not want to fight—that was no part of my plan, because I should have been overmastered or detained ; but I wanted to get clear off. From these devils I did escape, though not without a slight exchange of blows ; but they were too eager to get off themselves to chase me far.

When I found they had given over the chase, I began to walk rather slowly towards my father's house ; and it was well I did. The knife was still in my shirt ; and a man who has had such an escape never likes to throw away the friend on whom he has principally relied. When I turned the corner, I saw a man listening at the window ; and I knew him in a moment to be the skipper.

"Now," said I to myself,—“Now, Ben, you may bring him to action without fear ; for what business has he there?” So I walked up gently behind him, put one knee against his back, and before he could recover the haul I gave his collar, he was on the ground, and none the easier for the heavy fall. I knelt upon his breast, and fixing my left hand in his neckerchief, I gave it a twist which would have made any man believe the finisher of the law was at work.

He struggled fiercely, and his strength was tremendous ; but I tightened the nip about his throat, until his face was as black as a lobster. “Lie still !” said I, as I found I could master him.

I spoke loud, for I was in a high passion. At this moment I found my arm caught ; and turning round, I saw Jane.

“For God's sake, let not your father at his last gasp hear this scuffle ! I knew your voice, Ben, and I knew his. Release him, — for Heaven's sake do not harm him ! he is — he is — my husband !”

“Avaunt there, Jane,” said I ; “is that fellow your husband ?”

“Say yes, say yes, Tackle, and I'll forgive you all the miseries you have inflicted on me — say yes.”

This, then, was the villain who had ruined my poor

sister ! A fellow who had confessed himself to be not only a smuggler, but a murderer ! If ever I felt strongly the passion of revenge, it was now. Still I was so overcome at seeing Jane, that I unintentionally slackened my grip on the scoundrel's throat. In a moment, before I could recover myself, Tackle was on his legs, and, standing in front of me, he drew a pistol from his pocket, cocked and pointed it — Jane threw herself between us, Tackle fired, and she fell a corpse at my feet ! I sprang forward and struck the murderer with the knife, and it entered deeply. But he was off to the beach : his associates were there ready to resist an attack or to favour a flight. I followed until I saw him amongst his crew, carried on board the hooker, and she afloat with her sails hoisted.

I threw the knife from me, and returned to my sister. She was dead : no one had approached her. Poor Jane ! My heart sunk within me, to think of her cruel death. Although the door of the cottage was open, the noise of the pistol had been unheeded. I caught up the body and brought it towards the door ; and as I looked in and saw no one moving, I placed it inside. A stream of blood still flowed from the wound, and I kissed her, cold and pale and motionless as she was.

I then advanced into the room, and drawing aside the curtain, I saw my father. The hand of death was upon him ; but no wife was there to soothe his last moments ; no daughter was ready to wet the dry parched lips, which hardly were separated enough to allow the last breath of life to escape ; none stood by to proffer assistance or to soothe pain : there he lay alone, his daughter a corpse, his son perhaps a murderer !

" Father," said I, as I approached the bed. He opened his eyes, but there was no knowledge in them ; he fixed them upon me, but he saw me not — I felt he did not know me. The heavy lids soon closed again, and he lay in a state of stupor, pale and almost inanimate. I looked at him with all the respect an affectionate son could feel ; and I remained hanging over the bed, my eyes fixed upon my father, my memory retracing scenes of former days. Every now and then, I endeavoured to bring myself to his recollection.

There was occasionally a noise in the streets ; but the door was fastened and guarded by the dead : the body had fallen down and formed an unnatural barrier against intrusion. Again my father opened his eyes, and faintly called for " Drink." Some weak brandy and water was in a cup upon the table, in which was a sponge. I took it and squeezed some on the parched lips of the old man. He opened his mouth and greedily endeavoured to swallow : it revived him much, and in his eyes returning sense seemed to flash like lightning.

" Jane," he said, as he looked at me, — " Jane, is it you ? or, O God ! it is like my son, my boy ! "

" It *is* I, father. Look at me ; do you not know Ben ? Oh, do not close those eyes, — Father, it is I. "

" Jane," he said, — " Jane, where are *you* ? Ah ! if my old dame lived I should not be so neglected. "

The thought of my mother then first occurred to me. In the great anxiety for my father I had forgotten her who gave me life.

Poor old soul ! in vain he called — my mother was dead ! Jane was now dead also ; and there was none left to close his eyes, to stretch his limbs in death, but me ! He breathed heavily, and was occasionally convulsed a little ; and as a kind of foam covered his lips, I washed it off with the sponge, squeezing some of the spirit and water into his mouth. At last, about four o'clock in the morning, he gaped strongly and sat upright in the bed. The candle on the table, from its long wick, burned but faintly. Holding out to me his withered hand, which felt like that of a skeleton, —

" Ben," said he, " God bless you, my boy ! you are come to see the last of me. I feel it is all over with me ; I soon shall follow your poor mother, and, like her, bless you in my last moments. Ben, I have much to say. Take care of Jane. Poor soul ! she is gone to sleep ; she is tired, for she has been by my bedside ever since I was taken poorly. There is her child — you must be a father to her now. We must all muster aloft, you know, and the poor and the rich will there have equal judgment. God

forgive me for having wished Tackle's death! — but now I forgive him."

"I cannot, father," I said.

"Look to her, Ben: he may still marry her. I feel weak, very weak: call Jane to hear my dying prayer,—call her, Ben. Why do you sit staring at me? Go; she is asleep behind the screen."

I got up. Who can awake the dead but HIM? I passed round the bed: I saw the body of Jane move—I saw the hand rise. I felt an awful creeping of my flesh—ay, more fear came over me, with its chill, its cold suffocation of my breath, than when I had stood where hundreds fell. I well remember that dreadful scene. My father followed me with his death-struck look, and as I slowly and cautiously moved towards the dead, a loud shriek paralysed my limbs, and I saw the child striving to shut her mother's eyes;—the cold, glassy stare had frightened her. My father was sitting upright;—the child shrieked on seeing me, and ran to my father. One spark of life remained in him to whom she ran for refuge: he, with all his last energies, almost leapt from the bed, and then fell back a corpse.

I stood like a stone—and for some minutes did not dare to move. At length I roused myself with some effort and lifted Jane also upon the bed, drawing the sheet over the father and daughter.

I then turned to look for the child, but it was gone. I had no heart to call it from the place where it had hidden. Death is awful even to us who know it, who are familiar with it, and I did not like to frighten the child; so I began to speak as if my father still lived, calling myself Jane's brother, the child's uncle, his son. I heard a rustling behind the screen, and when I had stirred the dying embers of the fire, I told little Jane to come to me; and she came. The sight of the blood frightened her. I kissed her and fondled her: children know when they are beloved more instinctively than men, and infants will run to those who really love them, whilst the words of those who endeavour to express what they cannot feel are discovered in a second.

The child kept her eyes upon the bed, and I was not bold enough to look upon it. I knew that the removal of the sheet would show only the dead; I therefore consoled the poor thing, who shivered with cold, and taking it into its own sleeping place, I sat by her until she fell asleep. Oh, happy innocence! who could thus slumber where murder had been busy, and where the arm of death had been extended to the sick bed!

I came back to the front room and made a large fire; for the candle was nearly out, and I could not bear darkness. To go out was impossible, for I thought of the child. I sat down in Jane's chair, and keeping my eyes fixed upon the fire, I endeavoured to cheer up my heart and feel like a man.

I could not have been long thus seated, my mind excited by the many melancholy and horrid scenes I had lately witnessed, before I became sensible that some people were close to the house. I heard voices, and I was at once aware of the danger of my situation. Tackle must have been certain that he had shot Jane and not me, for he saw her fall and saw me following him. The pistol had dropped from his hand as he retreated; this evidence I had secured. Aware that I was the object of search, and that the danger was at hand, I began to turn in my mind the best method of keeping secure until daylight. I put a chair, on which I hung a blanket, between the fire and the window. The blaze of the wood had expended itself, and the light was now barely sufficient to make darkness visible. I first looked to the door; it was fast, and required very little more to render it difficult of being forced. I then got up to the shutter, and thus overheard the following conversation, the first speaker being Jacob: no one could mistake that ruffian.

"We must have him somehow: Tackle is dangerously wounded, and the woman shot. We must get at him. Is he in here?"

"Ay; I saw him go in and take the woman with him."

"Listen!" continued Jacob; "do you hear any one stirring?"

"No ; all is as still as death."

"Is old Brace alive yet?" continued Jacob.

"Yes," a strange voice replied ; "but he is not likely to live long."

"And the child?"

"It is still alive also."

"Then we have three alive in the house, even if the woman is dead. What o'clock is it?"

"Nearly five: it will be daylight at six ; or, at any rate, many of the fishermen will be stirring."

"Then we must be quick, finish him, and get on board as soon as possible. Tackle is off in the hooker, and will not wait beyond daylight ; then the custom-house sharks may overhaul the Nancy from stem to stern and be none the wiser. Did Tackle take his pistol aboard with him?"

"No ; he said he had dropped it."

"We must search for that ; it would be strong evidence. Look round the cottage, and see if there is no way in besides the door."

When I heard this, I cleared for action. I saw I was the object of their conversation, and I knew that if Jacob had only the crew of the Nancy, he had not more than three in his gang ; but three such fellows ! big enough and ugly enough to fight a Norway bear. As the front was secure, I thought it was no time to stow away like a frightened child ; so I lighted the remains of a rushlight, and blinding the light for fear of disturbing the child, I carefully surveyed my castle of defence. I was secure enough behind, for the door which led out that way was more secure than the front. As I looked round the room, I saw one of the child's playthings. It was composed of eight or ten pieces of flat wood painted on both sides, which when you turned the top piece over, the rest followed the example, making a slight clatter. This I lashed on the latch of the door ; so that if they had raised that, the plaything would have warned me of it. With this tell-tale secured, I returned into the front room, well knowing that no one therein could break the silence, on which now I mainly depended for safety. The child slept, as innocence always sleeps when health and exercise are its asso-

ciates: its little mouth was partly open; the flush of warmth was in her cheek, and as I placed my ear near her bed I could hardly hear her breathe, so softly, so soundly did she rest.

"Now God grant," said I, "that the child may sleep through this night!" I opened the cupboard, in which I had often seen the bottle deposited, and took a little encouragement from the spirit. I was dead beat; for I had not slept the night previously, and the excitement had wearied me more than the exercise. In every hole I sought for some powder, but I could not find a grain. Arms there were none: but the poker became a good substitute; and I placed that in the embers still burning, but not blazing. Having extinguished the light and left the passage clear between the two doors, I then took up my listening quarters.

"There's a door on the other side," said one of the men.

"Have you tried it?" asked Jacob.

"No; for I saw a light through the crevice, and I thought we might only be discovered."

"Go," said Jacob, "and try it."

A silence of some moments ensued, and then I heard the plaything mark the attempt. The man seemed to hear the noise, for he ran round to Jacob, and spoke so low and hurriedly, that I could not make out what he uttered. But Jacob spoke loud enough when he said, "Then we must go to work boldly." I started as if I had been electrified. I jumped on my legs when I heard two loud raps at the door, which sounded in the chamber of silence like the beat of a sledge hammer. I ran to the door, and, pretending to have been asleep, answered, "Who's there?"

"Me," replied a voice to which I was a stranger.

"*Me!*" said I: "why, who the devil is *me*, at this time of the morning?"

"Why, it's *me*. I want to speak to old Brace about his boat."

"Well, then," said I, "you may top your boom and be off: old Brace won't give you an answer now; and I'm

none the better obliged to you for having tried to disturb him."

"Oh, you'll do as well: open the door and I'll talk to you."

"Much obliged to you, sir, all the same," said I; "but it's rather cold, and too early for visitors."

"I say, Ben," said Jacob, altering his voice, "here's the devil to pay, and no pitch hot. I know you are here, from Tackle, who is dying. Come along, and I'll get you out of the scrape, and tell your father where we have stowed you. The constables will soon be after you."

"Bless your considerate heart, Jacob," said I; "but you may tell that to the marines—the sailors won't believe it. I'm awake; and I'm blest if I don't make more candidates for coffins if you or any of your precious gang attempt to enter in here!"

As the silence succeeded my words, I heard the toy rattle at the other door. I was there in a moment, and, imitating another voice, I called out, "Ship, ahoy! if you're a pirate, you had better be stirring, or I'll dust your jacket for you!" Then I hopped back again. The child was awakened, and began to cry with fright; for she saw me standing before the door with a red-hot poker in my hand. Jacob and his gang made a rush at it; but it stood firm, thanks to a cross-bar!

"Pop your finger in the hole," said Jacob, "and lift the latch, whilst we try another surge."

In came the finger against the red-hot poker, and out it went again.

"Ah," said I, "my lad, your finger will be warm enough for the next hour. Hadn't you better try and burn your finger again?"

"This won't do," said Jacob; "that fellow is well defended. Let us be off to the constable, and tell him of Tackle's murder. We will soon unearth this precious fox."

"I say, Jacob," said I, "don't you know that before a murder can be proved the body must be found?"

"You d—d sea-lawyer!" said he, "we will have the stretching of your legs before long. Come away, lads."

I was not much frightened at this declaration, because I

knew well enough that they were ignorant of Jane's death; and that before I could be taken up for Tackle's murder, even if he was dead, some one must have identified the body. Moreover, Tackle had sailed in the hooker: I was in that secret, thanks to my ears and my silence!

About a quarter of an hour afterwards I heard footsteps, and up came a devil of a row against the door.

"Open, in the name of the king!" said a strange voice.

"No," said I, "Jacob, it won't do,—it won't, I assure you. I'm a king's man, and hope all you Guernsey gentlemen are the same."

"I'm a constable, and desire the door may be immediately opened."

"Very sorry, sir, I can't obey your orders. If you think I'm a murderer, you can watch the house until daylight: I can't fly away, or get through the keyhole, like Jacob's friend's finger."

"Then we must burst the door open."

"The poker is still red-hot."

Jacob found I was resolved not to be taken by surprise; and, after one or two more attempts, he and his ruffians withdrew. I then got an hour's sleep, and when I awoke it was broad daylight. My own danger had interfered with the affection I bore my father and my sister: the dead were beyond human vengeance, but I was not. Now came in full array against me all that the malice of my enemies might invent. Yet I felt a security from the knowledge I had of the place the smugglers had chosen for the safe stowage of their contraband articles. I dressed the child, and, as well as I could, I made myself look decent. I then opened the window-shutter: there was only one man in the street, and he was an old beggar. Closing the door carefully, and taking with me the child, I walked on; and as I went along the street, I was struck by the appearance of a neat house, with a brass knocker, and with a large brass plate, on which was engraved, "Crimp, Attorney."

"You're the man to my mind," said I to myself; and I knocked at the door. I saw the old beggar run away like a hare. "Hulloa!" said I; "I smell a rat."

It was not eight o'clock: Crimp was asleep, and his dirty maid had hardly unbuttoned her eyes, although her tongue seemed to have been prepared for any conversation.

"Is your master up, Molly?" said I.

"Molly yourself, Mr. Sailor, my name's Martha," said she.

"Why, you're like a Yankee," said I; "you never give an answer. Is your master up?"

"Yes, to be sure he is, *up-stairs* in his room."

"Come, Martha, my pretty girl," said I, "will you tell him that I want to see him on very particular business?—tell him it's about a murder."

"Lord have mercy upon us!" said she; "and sure enough the blood's upon you now!" Banging the door in my face, she ran away, screaming, like an enraged cockatoo that her throat was cut.

"I wish it was!" said Crimp, coming down stairs. "Who is this fellow?" said he, as he opened the door.

He was dressed in a bedgown, with a white nightcap, and looked for all the world like an Italian butcher.

"Sir," said I, touching my hat, "I am come to you for advice how to act. My sister has been murdered, my father is lying dead in the same bed with her, and my own life is in danger. I could not go to Mr. Tapes, for he knows more about last night's business than he ought."

"Come in," said he. "Tapes concerned for the defendant, I suppose? Good case—quarter sessions near at hand—advice, six and eightpence. Let's hear all about it. Pretty child that!—old Brace's grand-daughter. How is he, my little dear?"

"Dead!" she answered.

"Dead?" said Crimp. "Poor fellow!—happy release—lost his wife, honest woman!—honest man! has a son, far away of course. Why don't you begin, my man?"

"Because I didn't think it right to interrupt your honour. I am old Brace's son: I arrived last night."

I then told him every thing connected with the business, from the time of my leaving London, sinking that part which referred to the place where the cargo was placed,

because I thought of Susan, and I would not bring her into trouble.

"A strong case!" said Crimp. "Old Tapes concerned. Send for the coroner — settle him, and take his business — I mean Tapes of course."

In a small place like Cawsand Bay such events as those that had occurred during the night were not likely to remain long a secret. Martha had overheard what I said, and before Crimp's boy could have got to the ferry to cross to Dock to find the coroner, every soul in the town knew all about the business. The house was beset with people, and loud and general was the indignation against Tackle. That he never had intended to shoot Jane, I knew; but that his intention was to commit murder was equally evident. Hundreds came to see the murdered daughter, now stretched by the side of her poor old father. The fault of Jane was forgotten in her sufferings—in the death she had received from the hand of her betrayer.

In the meantime Jacob and his party were not idle. Jacob himself proposed to give me a handsome sum of money to be off; but I declined, again saying that in regard to the smuggling I would never hold up my hand against him. Tapes ridiculed the whole business: he declared it was an affair of jealousy with some unknown person; that Tackle had not been seen in Cawsand for upwards of three years, and that the whole story was improbable and untrue;—nay, he went so far as to hint that I had murdered my own sister, mistaking her for another.

"Tapes," said I, "you are a scoundrel, and you know it better than I do. When last we met it was in anger, and I left my mark upon you: now you think to crush me by the malice of your suspicions. But Mr. Tapes," said I, as I whispered in his ear, "I don't wonder at your being in such good spirits, since you had so large an importation last night."

Tapes looked rather astonished, and kept his mouth open like an alligator catching flies, only shutting it to say "*What?*"

"I know all about it, old boy. Let me speak to Susan a minute, and we may yet be friends."

Whereupon I walked into his house, and offered my hand to Susan, but she walked out of the room. I felt that behaviour ; it cut me to the heart. I saw her children running about the room, and could have kissed them for the mother's sake ; but she drove them from me, as if I could contaminate them.

My heart misgave me : men cannot control their feelings — at least honest men cannot. I said, — and bitterly I repented it afterwards, for it gave Susan pain and rendered her unhappy, — “Why, Susan, you need not be proud, for it was owing to your own husband that Tackle committed the murder : and,” I continued, “your husband and yourself are in my hands — in my power.”

I looked at her as she walked proudly by me, taking a child in each hand. I watched her ; I was half inclined to recall to her mind the time when she sat with my mother, and was my correspondent. Tapes came in as I went down stairs, and said something to irritate me ; upon which I called out, “I'll transport you and your wife, you nest of smugglers !”

“Smugglers !” said Tapes.

“Smugglers,” said I ; “put that in your pipe and smoke it ;” and out I walked like a lord.

The coroner came, and I was placed in the witness-box. Tapes attended merely to hear the proceedings ; but Crimp was there to bring the secret to light. I went through the whole of my examination fearlessly. I did not implicate Jacob, because I felt I could bring nothing against him which I could prove ; and he was present, sitting as coolly as an innocent man. By the side of Crimp was an excise officer, who, with the rest, seemed led there from motives of curiosity. I detailed the facts. The coroner asked if there was any other witness ; when Crimp said “Yes,” and put up a young lad of about eighteen, who having had occasion to go to Dock early, had risen before his intended time in consequence of a noise he heard in the street. He saw the scuffle between myself and Tackle, and, after the murder, followed him to the beach, and saw him embark.

“Well,” said the coroner, “did you see any one else ?”

"Yes," replied the boy; "I saw him!" pointing to Jacob.

"What had he to do with it?"

"Nothing particular; but he seemed very intimate with the man who fired the pistol, and pushed him into the boat."

"Oh!" said the coroner. "Pray, did you see any one else?"

"Yes," said the boy; "I saw Mr. Tapes down there."

"Down where?"

"By the boat: he was talking to that man, and the man who fired."

"What was he about down there?"

"Why, he was busy getting some kegs from the boat, and taking them to the old bake-house."

"Oh!" said the excise officer; and he was off like a rocket, just whispering something to Crimp, who turned his nose up, rubbed his hands, and looked at Tapes with a mighty pretty sneer.

Jacob was about to be off: but the coroner detained him for evidence; during which time the exciseman had made the seizure of the whole concern, had taken steps for the security of Jacob and Tapes, — and they were in for a nice job.

The inquest returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against Thomas Tackle," and the coroner issued his warrant for his apprehension. Jacob was detained in order to be examined before a magistrate, one or two of whom had come over to witness the inquest; and Tapes was seized as a smuggler, the goods being found on his premises, and the boy's evidence being conclusive against him. Crimp rose in estimation upon the wreck of Tapes; and Susan — poor dear Susan! — soon changed her fine house for a hovel near the county gaol.

By the kindness of one or two of the gentlemen, who saw how I took the murder to heart, and who felt interested about the child, I was saved much expense in the decent funeral of my father and sister; and as I turned from the grave, I felt myself alone in the world, without friend or relations! I was the last of our name, for the

child had hardly a legal right to it. I dropped a tear as I put the key of the cottage in Crimp's hand ; and leaving him to arrange matters in that respect, I left Cawsand with the child, and, crossing to Dock, soon returned to London and to the admiral.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Scarce the foul hurricane was clear'd ;
 Scarce winds and waves had ceased to rattle ;
 When a bold enemy appear'd,
 And, dauntless, we prepared for battle. — DIEDIN.

WHEN I got to town, I went of course to the admiral's: I knew he would be overcome by the sight of the pretty orphan.

I asked if the admiral was at home, and the maid told me he was. So up I ran to my room, and getting some fresh rigging over my masthead, and washing the child's figure-head, I took her by the hand and walked into the room. Nelson was writing; but hearing the door open, he looked up and said, "Ah, Brace! you are just returned in time.—Why, who have you got there?" looking at the child.

"It's all that is left of our family, your honour: my sister has been murdered by her husband."—I did not like to hurt her reputation, and in a good cause I ventured the first lie I ever told to the admiral.—"My father and my mother are dead, and I am here alone in the world, and, without your honour, I have no friend."

Nelson rose. The voice in which I had summed up my losses had found its way to his heart.

"Come here, my little cherub," said he. "What's her name?"

"Jane, your honour," said I.

"Brace," said he, "I'll be a father and a friend to her."

Nelson looked at the child with the fondness of a good man: he patted her little head and played with her hair;

then he placed her on his knee, and began coaxing her to speak. The child grew fond of him directly ; and always after that, until we sailed, little Jane was much noticed by the admiral and Lady Nelson. Both seemed to like her ; and when we parted to sail for the Straits again, Lady Nelson promised that on our return Jane should be able to write, in order to stand secretary for her uncle, who, she said, one day might be like her husband. That was a compliment I treasured up in the store-room of my heart.

It was early in the year 1798 that Nelson hoisted his flag on board the Vanguard ; and there was Ben Brace a sort of pet spaniel on board. I was a kind of servant, secretary, and quartermaster, and in action was stationed at the signals. We had a convoy under our charge, and sailed on the 9th of April for Lisbon, in order to join Lord St. Vincent. I remember, when we parted from Lady Nelson, that the admiral gave Jane to her care with words of great tenderness.

Well, we sailed, and joined the commander-in-chief on the 20th, off Cadiz. We were then sent off Toulon to watch the French fleet ; we had with us the Orion and Alexander of seventy-four guns each, the Emerald and Terpsichore frigates, and the Bonne Citoyenne sloop-of-war.

The French had in Toulon thirteen ships of the line, seven forty-gun frigates, twenty-four smaller vessels of war, and about two hundred transports : they were fitting out under Bonaparte, who was then determined to take Malta, and afterwards land in Egypt. Our business was to watch the marauders, and to be ready for another brush upon any occasion. We soon had one, but it was not with the French — it was with the Clerk of the Weather.

We had got into the Gulf of Lyons ; and a precious place it is for a gale of wind ! for it seems to me as if it never stopped blowing and rolling from one year's end to another. It was on the 19th of May, and it sprang up after noon. We old sailors, who have been half our lives in those seas, know that if a breeze springs up after twelve o'clock in the day, and freshens gradually as the sun goes down, in the night we shall catch it pretty warmly. At

first the breeze came from the northward, and then chopped round to the north-west. About three P. M. we reefed top-sails, and began to look to windward, for the mackerel-sky; but the clouds were blowing out like so many locks of ladies' hair. At sunset, all round us looked like the blacksmith's forge in his dirty shop of a dark night when he is blazing up; or like the copper-foundry in Portsmouth, or like the prospect of the devil's own gale of wind.

About eight P. M. we took every stitch off the ship, with the exception of a mizen staysail; and the wind came howling and whistling with such force, that one of the after-guard, who was coiling the lee fore-brace down by the bits, was blown against one of the boats on the booms, and was jammed there so tightly that he could not move: the pressure was so great against him that he soon afterwards died. And as for that gale of wind when the captain of the main-top could not cut away the top-sail because the edge of the knife was turned by the wind, or when every tooth in the quartermaster's head was blown down his throat, they were quite cat's-paws to this! In all my life I never knew it blow harder.

Well, the gale continued. The scud flew over the stars, and the moon was only visible at intervals. The sea looked as if it was all in flames, and more like an angry surf breaking upon a reef of rocks at the first dawn of day, than a regular roll of even a short sea.

The gale now roared through the rigging; the night got darker and darker as the moon went down, and by midnight we looked like a vessel in a fiery ocean. The sea was running high; the ship worked and creaked. About one A. M. she was struck by one of those toppling waves which come rolling along like a Congreve-rocket: it struck us on the starboard ches-tree, flew over us like a fountain, and carried away the main-topmast. The hands were on deck, of course; for the mizen-topmast was over the side also, and it was requisite to clear the wreck. We tried a signal or two; but it was of no use — the lanterns were playing "dodge Pompey," and the lights were out before the signal could be made. The admiral wished the squadron to wear together, to prevent any mischief from one ship

running on board the other : but it blew so hard that the lights were of no use ; and as for guns, the man who fired them scarcely heard the report or saw the flash !

The ship laboured so much, that the admiral endeavoured to wear ; but, at the moment, the foremast went in three places, and the bowsprit was sprung. The captain tried to use the speaking-trumpet, but the wind blew the voice back into his throat, and the jumble of the one coming up and the other going down nearly choked him. We worked like sea-horses ; and, when daylight dawned, there we were, a wreck at the mercy of the waves. But we got her before the wind, by the assistance of the remnant of the spritsail, and Captain Ball, who commanded the *Alexander*, took us in tow, and we got safe into St. Peter's Island, near Sardinia.

Misfortunes never come single. On the day of the gale, the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and must have passed us within a few miles. That was a misfortune ; though it would have been a greater if they had caught us after the gale. But I will give you the admiral's account of the storm which he wrote to his wife.

" *Vanguard*, off St. Peter's Island, May 24., 1798.

" MY DEAREST FANNY,

" I ought not to call what has happened to the *Vanguard* by the cold name of accident : I believe firmly it was the Almighty goodness, to check my consummate vanity. I hope it has made me a better officer, as I feel it has made me a better man : I kiss with all humility the rod. Figure to yourself, on Sunday evening at sunset, a vain man walking in his cabin, with a squadron around him who looked up to their chief to lead them to glory, and on whom their chief placed the firmest reliance, that the proudest ships, if equal numbers, belonging to France, would have lowered their flags. Figure to yourself, on Monday morning when the sun rose, this proud conceited man, his ship dismasted, his fleet dispersed, and himself in such distress, that the meanest frigate out of France would have been an unwelcome guest ! But it has pleased Almighty God to bring us into a safe port," &c.

Sir Horatio never took any credit to himself, or gave much of it to Captain Ball : he thought it was to Heaven alone that thanks should be given for such a deliverance.

We were four days refitting, Captain Ball and Captain Berry lending us a hand, and at the expiration of that time we had a jury foremast. We fished the bowsprit, and on the evening of the fourth day we were at sea again.

Some few weeks afterwards we had a reinforcement of ships sent us. There was Troubridge in the Culloden ; Foley in the Goliath ; Louis in the Minotaur ; John Peyton in the Defence ; the Bellerophon, Captain Darby ; Majestic, Captain Westcott ; Zealous, Captain Hood ; Swiftsure, Captain Hallowell ; Theseus, Captain Miller ; Audacious, Captain Gould : all of them seventy-fours. The Leander, Captain Thompson, of fifty guns, afterwards joined us. I remember all these names, because they all fought with us at the Nile.

There have been many accounts of this famous victory, but it has never yet been told by the coxswain, the valet, the under-secretary, the follower, the signal-man of Sir Horatio Nelson : and I flatter myself — not that I want a certificate from any one — that I signalised myself.

No sooner had the squadron joined us, than it was “Hurrah for the first man who sees the French fleet !” At daylight we had half the officers, with their glasses slung over their shoulders, scudding up to the mastheads, and sweeping the horizon as we did the seas. We had no directions from Lord St. Vincent what course to steer ; the admiral knew that he had given the command to Nelson, and although one or two older officers complained of this favour and affection, yet St. Vincent knew that he had placed the honour of England in hands well able to maintain it.

The first news we had was, that the French fleet had surprised Malta, and that the place had surrendered. The consul at Messina told the admiral, that owing to the treachery of the Grand Master and some of the Knights of Malta, Bonaparte had been successful. These foolish knights contrived, by various means, to prevent any opposition being made by the garrison ; — the batteries were

unprovided with ammunition, — the cartridges were filled with *sand* — and the shot (to be sure, without powder, shot are not of much use, were too large for the guns. Yet Bony pompously styled it “one of the most brilliant exploits of the French nation !” We were a day after the fair in that quarter — the mischief was done : we therefore steered towards the Archipelago ; the French fleet having left Goza on the 16th of June, and it was the 20th when we arrived.

It was a time of great excitement. We knew our enemy was out of his harbour ; we knew that Nelson would not allow any opportunity to escape ; and the daily exercising of guns, flourishing of cutlasses, and twirling of boarding-pikes, gave us clearly to understand that if we did meet the French fleet an action was determined on. Yet, in spite of our look-out (for we afterwards learnt this), the French fleet, amounting in all to nearly 400 sail, passed us during the night of the 22d, within four miles. They must have huddled together like sheep in a squall, or we should have pounced on a straggler, and had the action at sea instead of at anchor.

On the 28th of June we arrived off Alexandria ; but the French were not there, neither could we get any information relative to them. The governor expected them, and was repairing the fortifications, and getting every thing ready to give them a warm welcome. We steered away for Caramania ; the admiral and all his officers looking like those people who follow a hearse. Still the enemy were somewhere and the one eye of the admiral never closed. We steered along the southern side of Candia, carrying all sail night and day. Nelson often said he should like to try Bonaparte on a wind : he had beat us at Vado Bay, but I’m blessed if we would not have beat him out at sea ! Well, night followed the day, and day followed the night, as the boatswain used to say : but no French fleet could we find. The ships required a supply of water ; and we were obliged to put into Syracuse, in Sicily, in order to get some of that stuff, which is only good for shaving, on board.

We might have been there now if it had not been for a

lady. We sailed on the 25th of July from Syracuse, and made the Gulf of Coron on the 28th. Troubridge stood in for intelligence, and returned making the signal that the enemy had steered to the south-east four weeks ago. Well, we before-the-mast-men thought that a month was a long time. I have known a frigate come from the Havannah in eighteen days; and it is on record that the admiral on the Newfoundland station breakfasted in his own house one Sunday, and dined with the admiral at Portsmouth on the next. So that, when we put that and that together, we smoked our pipes in the galley, and cocked our eyes at each other, as much as to say, "Catch a weasel asleep! Bony is off to Jamaica before this, and has drunk cocoa-nut water at Barbadoes."

The admiral was as pleased as if he had found them; he walked quickly up and down the quarter-deck, rubbing his hand against the side of his trowsers, his face jumping about like Sykes when he was electrified. We had just given it up for a bad job: but the admiral bears up, spreading out the studding-sails, and making the mate of the watch heave the log every quarter of an hour to see how much faster we went. We steered from Alexandria, carrying on until the masts groaned, and sailing close together, every morning keeping the look-out ships well distant from us, and in the evening collecting the squadron together. "If the French are on the seas," said Nelson, "I'll find them, or it shall not be for sparing the spars or saving the sails."

CHAPTER II.

At the battle of the Nile,
Our children shall smile,
And tell ages yet unborn what deeds Nelson has performed.—*Sea Song.*

It was on the 1st of August—the glorious 1st of August!—England will remember that day, and so will France, as long as the nations exist. Hood, in the *Zea-*

lous, who had made the signal for the land, about four in the afternoon made the signal also for the French fleet at anchor. It was round the decks in a second ; we did not want any drummer to beat to quarters, or boatswain to turn the hands up. We were every man of us aloft ; and we came bolting down the rigging to clear the decks, for we saw that before dark we should be into a fight. The admiral, who ever since we entered the Gulf of Coron had never sat down to a regular meal, now ordered his steward to pipe to dinner ; and he seemed that day in higher spirits than ever I saw him. I was in the cabin the whole time, clearing away for the breeze ; and when the officers rose from table, Nelson said, " Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey."

As we drew in-shore, I counted the number of the enemy myself. The odds before the battle stood thus, though they changed a little afterwards. The French fleet consisted of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, carrying in all eleven hundred and ninety-six guns, and eleven thousand two hundred and thirty men. Our fleet consisted of the same number of ships of the line and one fifty-gun ship, carrying ten hundred and twelve guns, and eight thousand and sixty-eight men. Ours were all seventy-fours : the French had three eighty-gun ships, and one three-decker of one hundred and twenty guns.

The French were moored in a line of battle in Aboukir Bay ; and directly we were close enough to make out the position, we hauled our wind. It was then north-north-west, blowing a top-gallant breeze, and we took in the royals when we hauled up : the rest of the squadron did the same. We now got a bower-cable out abaft and bent it forward, in order to anchor by the stern should it be requisite ; and the signal was made " to prepare to anchor with springs at the cable : " then followed Nelson's intention, " to engage the van and centre of the enemy." A close line of battle was formed, and we stood in to the bay, sounding as if we were going into Port Royal, the leadsmen calling the soundings without the least shake in his voice. Not a man in our fleet had the least knowledge of the bay, nor was any known chart of it in existence : to be

sure, they found on board of a vessel captured on the 29th June, an ill-drawn plan, so unlike the original, that it would have resembled Mount Bay in Jamaica as much as that of Aboukir. The signal was flying "for the headmost ship to bear down and engage as she reached the van of the enemy, the next ship to pass by and engage the second ship of the line," and so on.

The French admiral had sounded before us; he knew where the reef was, and he placed a French brig there in order to tempt us to near the Island of Bakier. But old birds, you know, are not to be caught with chaff, and that plan failed. We bore up, the Goliath leading the way, she having outsailed the Zealous, much to the anger of Hood, who disputed the honour with Foley until his ship dropped astern.

It is an awful thing going into an engagement like this. Every preparation had been made, and we stood in silence awaiting the fire of our enemies. Their line presented a noble appearance: they were anchored in compact order close in with the shore, describing an obtuse angle in its form, flanked by gun-boats, mortar-vessels, and four large frigates; these again were supported by a battery of guns and mortars on the island, near which it was requisite to pass.

The situation was well chosen; for it gave a decided advantage. They had no sails to work, no anchors to drop, no ropes to belay, no position to insure; they had only to blaze away steadily; their ships forming fixed batteries, and the batteries protecting the ships.

The firing began. The French line opened with a steadiness which proved their nerves and their skill; but as the ships approached without yawing a point, each vessel steering for the van-ship, round which they had to pass, a little wildness of direction, a little hurry to blaze away, was evident. The Goliath took the first shot about half-past six o'clock: batteries, gun-boats, and ships, all saluted him at once; he passed ahead of the van-ship and anchored alongside of the second ship. Hood in the Zealous followed close, and brought up on the bow of the Guerrier. When we were standing in, Nelson hailed Hood, and asked him

if he thought there was sufficient depth of water for our ships between the enemy and the shore? "I don't know, sir," replied the gallant captain; "but, with your permission, *I will stand in and try.*" He did carry all sail to be the first; but the Goliath beat him in sailing, and, like the giant, beat all the enemies he came near.

In twelve minutes the Guerrier was dismasted; and the next opponent of the Zealous, the Conquérant, shared the same fate. The third ship was the Orion, Captain James Saumarez. In standing in, La Sérieuse, a French frigate, dared to fire upon him; he gave her only one broadside, and she reeled and sunk directly. That was an awful moment! the work of a second had sent hundreds to destruction! Saumarez passed on as if nothing had been done, and quietly took his station on the larboard bow of the Franklin and the quarter of the Peuple Souverain, receiving and returning the fire of both. Then came the Audacious, Captain Gould; she anchored on the bow of the Conquérant. The Theseus, Captain Miller, followed, giving the Guerrier a salute that astonished her ship's company, and took his station on the larboard side of the Spartiate.

It was no small mortification to be looking on so long; but it was now our turn. Nelson, aware of the impossibility of the rear of the French line, which were to leeward, coming to the assistance of their van, resolved to double his force on the van in order to destroy it at once; and, having his own permission, he set the example to the rest of the fleet, and anchored on the outside of the enemy's line, placing them by this manœuvre between two fires. The Vanguard, with half-a-dozen ensigns flying, steered for the *larboard* side of the Spartiate, anchored within half pistol-shot, and opened a fire which soon silenced that ship, although we suffered terribly; for the raking fire of the Aquilon, the next ship in the French line, was hot and well directed: but Captain Louis, in the Minotaur, anchoring between the Aquilon and the Vanguard, relieved us, and soon settled the affair with her opponent.

There I stood, with a spy-glass under my arm, on the poop of the Vanguard, reporting the ships to the admiral

as they came into action : and it was with no small pride that I saw the *Bellerophon*, Captain Darby, run along the line, and drop her anchor close alongside the *Orient*, of one hundred and twenty guns ; the latter being the flagship of the French admiral Brueys : and boldly and gallantly was it done. Captain Peyton, in the *Defence*, followed close in the *Bellerophon*'s wake, and taking his station ahead of the *Minotaur*, the line remained unbroken. He had on his larboard bow the *Franklin*, of eighty guns, which ship carried the flag of Rear-admiral Blanquet. The *Majestic*, Captain Westcott, got foul of one of the ships astern of the *Orient*, and suffered severely from that ship's fire : she was soon cleared, and got into action with the *Heureux*, on the starboard bow, and the *Tonnant*, of eighty guns, on the starboard quarter, the eighth and ninth ships of the enemy's line. Four other ships of the English squadron had yet to come into action : they had been despatched to reconnoitre Alexandria, previously to the discovery of the French fleet ; they were therefore far away at half-past six P. M. when the action began ; and night having closed about seven, it required much prudence to avoid the shoals, when they saw the fierceness of the action, and, like all seamen, were anxious to make a straight course towards their enemies.

The *Culloden* was about two leagues astern, but was the leading ship of the detached squadron. The night was dark ; but Troubridge was cool and collected. The leadman called the soundings ; and no man could have imagined that between the soundings of eleven and the time required to gather in the lead-line, especially when directions had been given to "heave quick," the ship would be on shore. But so it was with the *Culloden* : neither could all the exertions of the crews of the *Leander* or *Mutine* relieve her from her situation in time to share in the action. Just think what a man like Troubridge must have felt, when he heard the roar of the guns, the blaze of the musketry, and saw the lights of the English fleet — (we had each of us four).

The *Culloden* served as a beacon to the following ships ; and it must have been some consolation to all the gallant

fellows on board of her, that although they were hard and fast, they warned the rest of the danger, and thus the other ships got safe into action. The Cullodens could bear it; they were all tried men; their captain was as brave a fellow as ever drew breath, their officers heroes.

Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, kept further away from the reef, and seeing a dismasted ship drifting out of the bay, imagined it might be an English ship. It was the *Bellerophon*, who had been overpowered by the *Orient*, her masts and cables cut away, two hundred of her crew killed and wounded. She was going out of the action, although every heart on board of her yearned to get her into fire again. Hallowell occupied the space she had left open, never firing a shot until his sails were clewed up and his ship anchored in her station; whilst the *Alexander*, Captain Ball, boldly and nobly supported him. Then came the *Leander*: Troubridge had despatched her to Nelson's assistance. She endeavoured to anchor athwart hawse of the *Orient*; but the *Franklin* being so close to her as to render this impossible, Captain Thompson took his station ahead of the latter ship, thus raking the two ships of the two French admirals.

Now, then, it was a fair field and no favour. The French fought well; but this doubling system quite surprised their intellects. Such was the destruction, that before a quarter of an hour had expired, the two van-ships of the enemy's line were dismasted; and although ships don't want masts when they are at anchor, yet no sailor fights as well in a floating hulk as he does when the top-gallant yards are across: a mast going creates confusion, and confusion begets fear.

The action was now in the centre of the line. The *Orient*, *Tonnant*, *Franklin*, and *Heureux* were fighting like fury to recover the day—or night, whichever you like best. The *Bellerophon*, having been blown almost to pieces, gave fresh heart to the French seamen: and those who know any thing of that nation, know that no men fight better when a little success has flushed them with conquest; but in a retreat, or when they begin to wax faint-hearted, they go off like chaps on the West India station, when

yellow Jack has laid his claws upon them — they are all noise and nonsense, and then despair and die.

They fought well — there's no denying that : and that man is a fool who ever takes from the valour of his beaten enemy ; for in that proportion he takes from the merit of the victory.

When our fleet first bore up to engage, we were saluted by a shower of shot and shell from two batteries on the island, and were then obliged to receive the whole fire from the broadsides of the French line full into our bows. The Frenchmen were at first as cool as cucumbers, and never fired until we were within half gun-shot distance, when both fleets and batteries hoisted their colours, and the Frenchmen began to salute.

It was now that the admiral received a severe wound and fell into the arms of Captain Berry. I saw him fall, and jumped off the poop like a lamplighter. I never saw such an ugly hit in my life. The Langridge-shot—a mixture of broken nails, glass, tomahawks, and boarding-pikes—came skimming along the deck, and one of them had struck the admiral on the forehead : it cut the skin at right angles, and it fell down over his face, making a horrible wound. I thought it must have gone right through his head ; and I trembled like a leaf when I took him by the legs, and gently with some assistance conveyed him below. I had never seen the doctor at work before during an action ; and he looked for all the world like a butcher with his bleeding lambs around him.

“ Make way for the admiral ! ” said I. There was not a man in that cockpit, wounded or dying, that didn't make a stir to leave room for him they all but worshipped.

“ No, doctor,” said Nelson ; “ I will take my turn with my brave followers.”

I wish I could give an idea of the murmur of admiration which came from lips fast closing for ever, — the dying, whose thoughts had been far away. Directly Nelson came amongst them, they recollected he was their admiral ; and one gallant fellow under the surgeon's hand rolled off the chest to make room for his commander. He heard me say to the surgeon, “ Lord love you, sir ! do look at this.”

"Is that you, Brace?" said the admiral, for the skin covered his eyes.

"It is, Sir Horatio," said I.

"Always by me," he continued,—"when most wanted. Tell the clergyman to come here." It was evident he thought that he had received his orders from aloft, and that he was fitted foreign.

Well, away I went for Mr. Comyns; and the good gentleman immediately attended the summons. He was a man much liked by us all, for he was always very kind. He came. Lord! how I shuddered and shook, when I saw this hero stretched out, believing himself to be mortally wounded! "My last remembrance, — *my last*, — mind, Mr. Comyns, — to Lady Nelson." He recollected other matters, and told me to get a commission filled up for Captain Hardy, promoting him to be post-captain, and appointing him to the Vanguard. "And, do you hear, tell Mr. Capel to go on board the Minotaur, and desire Captain Louis to come to me: I must thank him for his gallant support and assistance this day. — I have been, Mr. Comyns, one hundred and twenty-four times engaged; but now, I believe, it is nearly over with me."

Captain Louis came down; and he hung over his friend and glorious chief in silent sorrow. "Farewell, dear Louis, farewell! I shall never forget the obligation I am under to you for your brave and generous conduct. And now, whatever may become of me, my mind is at peace." I was then supporting the head which was laid as if in death upon my lap. I was wiping away from my eyes what no man could have suppressed, and hardly saw the surgeon who had approached. The quick glance of science instantly detected that the wound was not mortal; and before the doctor could say the word, the conviction had flashed also upon my mind, and I called out, "Cheer up, cheer up, ship-mates! the admiral's wound is not serious, after all."

Whilst the surgeon had been examining the wound, you might have heard a pin-fall; but when the words "not serious" were repeated, the wounded and the dying, the bleeding and the fainting, gave a cheer which must have come more home to the heart of Nelson than all the rewards that

were ever showered upon him. I blubbered like a girl, and Captain Louis was like a man electrified. It was no use that the doctor said, "Do, sir, keep quiet."

"Brace," said the admiral, "tell Mr. Campbell to get every thing ready for writing the despatches." Campbell had been wounded himself, and was unable, partly from his wound, and partly from his feelings for the admiral, to write. "Tell the chaplain, then," said the admiral, "to come." But before he came, I had carried the admiral to his cabin, and he had taken a pen, and begun to trace the first lines, which marked the gratitude to HIM who had thus given the victory to us.

About half-past eight, the Aquilon and Peuple Souverain had an English crew on board of them; and captain Berry despatched a lieutenant to take possession of the Spartiate. The officer returned with the French captain's sword, which Captain Berry brought to the admiral. He looked at it, and then handing it to me, said, "Come, Brace, some more of the old work; you'll never be able to carry all these under your arms."

It was about nine o'clock — the victory was certain: the van of the line had Englishmen on board of them; the firing still continued along the line, but the result was unquestionable. The admiral was below, when a noise — a loud, busy noise — announced that the Orient, the ship of the French commander-in-chief, was on fire. It's an awful sound, "Ship on fire!" on board a ship, and all eyes were immediately turned in the direction of the ruin. I left the admiral all alone: his head was bandaged up, the skin replaced, so that he saw well enough out of his larboard hawse-hole*, and I ran on deck to get all intelligence I could.

* A very intelligent friend of mine, and one who has kindly marked some errors in the first edition of this work, has a marginal note added by himself in reference to this expression. He declares it is not nautical, and that a sailor would have said "glimmer," or "toplight." The editor of Ben Brace's life and adventures differs from the learned captain; trembling, of course, at his audacity for daring to think contrary to such successful authority. The Maltese vessels have generally the hawse-holes of their ships painted to resemble eyes: on their boats, where, if hawse-holes were placed in boats, they would be in the same place, are eyes. The Chinese have eyes in the same place; and I am fearful the gallant officer when he affixed the note saw with jaundiced eyes. I cannot, however, become his pupil on this occasion, notwithstanding I admit his note to have been an eye-lash.

It appears that the French admiral, little dreaming that this action was likely to take place where he was moored, had been painting his broadside, which the *Bellerophon* afterwards spoilt. The paint-pots were all about the decks, — and new paint and oil are not like the newly-discovered dresses in which a man may walk in a fire without being singed. When this blaze was first observed to have broken out in the after-part of the *Orient*, Captain Hallowell desired all the guns that could be spared from accommodating the *Franklin* to be directed to that part of the *Orient* which was now on fire; and he called Captain Allen of the Marines, and ordered him to continue his musketry only in that direction: this was done to hinder the French from extinguishing the flames. The crew of the *Orient* slackened their fire, although they blazed away from the lower deck to the last, in order to put out the blaze on board of their own ship; and our increased energy, all in one direction, made the slaughter more serious.

The admiral, who had fought like a Frenchman — and like a gallant fellow too — had already received three serious wounds; yet he kept his station and cheered on his men. A round-shot from the *Swiftsure* at last cut him in half, and he was spared the terrible termination of the battle. Casa Branca, his captain, fell by his side. The confusion now became dreadful; the flames spread far and near; for the fire of the *Swiftsure* was so well directed, and the slaughter so great, that, gallant fellows as they were, the crew of the *Orient* quailed before the increasing and devouring element. Many jumped overboard to avoid what they saw was inevitable; whilst the flames spread along the decks, and darted up the rigging like the quick rocket in its ascent, leaving behind it a stream of liquid fire.

In vain now did many supplicate for mercy; the steady aim of the *Swiftsure* soon thinned the number who yet nobly, though fruitlessly, endeavoured to remedy the evil. The water closed over many who sought it as a refuge; whilst the roar of the guns, the unceasing rattle of the musketry, the cracking of the wood, the rush of the blaze

overcame any shriek which the sufferers might have uttered.

At this moment, one sound, louder than the loudest thunder, deadened even the fury of the combatants ; and each ship experienced a tremulous motion as if an earthquake had occurred. The Orient had blown up ; and such was the startling effect of this dreadful explosion, that those whose blood boiled with the heat of victory were paralysed by the sudden crash, and they left the work of death to gaze on that of destruction. The glare of light illuminated the Bay of Aboukir. The darkness of the night had before rendered the position of the four last ships which came into action doubtful ; but now the terrible blaze turned night into day, — every ship, every flag was visible. An awful, a death-like silence succeeded the fearful event ; and not a soul whispered his fears, not a voice even shouted the name which flew on the tongues of all, until mast after mast, and spar after spar, fell with their loud splash into the water, and broke the silence. Never has man seen such a sight !

I turned to see who it was that rested his arm upon my shoulder ; — it was the admiral. He had, unobserved, reached the deck ; and his voice first broke the silence on board the Vanguard. “The boats ! — the boats, Berry ! Be quick — send them instantly to rescue the crew, if possible ! — Brace !”

“Sir,” said I, turning my head.

“The signal-book, instantly.”

I left him, and he stood amongst his own crew hardly recognised : the scene they had just witnessed had destroyed even the discipline of an English sailor ; and you know what a sound it must have been to shake the brains of the foremastmen, so that they stood by their admiral without noticing him.

The boats of our ship, and those of the other vessels near the Franklin, saved about seventy of the Orient’s men : many more were picked up, who, previously to the explosion, and knowing its certainty, had lashed themselves to spars, and launched themselves overboard.

Awful as the scene was, it was mixed up with a little

amusement. A French lieutenant of the Orient, when he found it impossible to quench the flames, stripped himself for a swim. He then thought it would be requisite for him to wear some distinguishing mark of his rank, and he clapped on a cocked-hat, as the most unlikely to embarrass him. In this *undress* he was received on board the Swiftsure, and at once walked to the quarter-deck, where he took off his hat and bowed in his Adam-like costume with much gravity to the first lieutenant, announcing his rank. "Very well," said the Englishman, "montez the poop, Munseer." "Bien obligé pour votre politesse," replied the Frenchman, and just reached his destination in time to see his ship blown up.

The English fleet was now in some danger from the falling spars: two large pieces fell in the foretop of the Swiftsure: a lighted portfire fell into the main-royal of the Alexander; but Ball, who was a good officer, had provided against all contingencies, and it blazed innocently until a hand was sent aloft and removed it.

When the silence occasioned by this dreadful explosion had been broken by the fall of the masts, &c., the firing instantly recommenced along the line to leeward of the centre, and continued without intermission until three o'clock.

At daybreak every eye was on the alert to mark the progress of victory. Every ship, with the exception of the Guillaume Tell and the Généreux, the two rear-most ships of what was formerly the French line, had struck her colours; and these two, taking advantage of a light flaw of wind, cut their cables and put to sea. The Zealous instantly made sail in chase; but every other ship had been so seriously injured in the rigging, that none could follow the noble example of Captain Hood, and Nelson recalled him. Two frigates escaped also; and, with the exception of these four ships, every vessel of the French line lowered her colours to the Cross of St. George. Think what must have been the feeling of those men who looked at the glorious sight! think how we shook each other by the hand! think how heartily we congratulated each other: To be sure we did growl a bit when we

learned that the Orient had on board 600,000*l.*, which had gone to the fishes.

Of thirteen sail of the line, nine were taken and two burnt; of the frigates one was sunk and one burnt. This latter was the *Artemise*, commanded by a scoundrel, a disgrace to the French navy, one *Monsieur Standelet*. He fired his broadside into the *Theseus*; that was all fair enough, and we gave him credit for his pluck, especially after the example of *La Sérieuse*. Directly he had blazed away all his wrath, which he did in this one broadside, he struck his colours. That was all right enough, if he and his crew liked being prisoners better than sheering off and making sail. But after he had struck, and when the *Theseus'* crew, with all the generosity of sailors, would have stretched a hand to assist any one of the crew of the frigate had they been in danger, what does this fellow do, in the face of every law of honour and of nations, but set fire to the ship, now no longer his, but ours, and getting his men into the boats, escape with the rest of his poltroon crew. — That was a disgrace to the Great Nation, as these flamingoes call themselves.

Well, this *was* a victory — Nelson said it should have been called a conquest. We lost eight hundred and ninety-five men, and no less than five thousand two hundred and twenty-five of the French were killed; the rest, three thousand one hundred and five, were sent away in a cartel. We lost one gallant fellow, Captain Westcott; but he fell in the moment of victory, in the most glorious action ever fought. And as, on the 2d of August, we worked like horses to secure our prizes and to repair our fleet, many and many's the time that we stopped in our duty, and shaking hands with our next neighbour, would say, "It was a great victory: and only think what the girls will say when we stand in to Spithead!" — Lord bless them! we always used to think of them. Who would give a fig for a laurel, if the eyes of woman did not render it sacred?

But avast! I am going out of the yarn, — and that's wrong, because I have a duty to perform towards the admiral. His mind, although occupied with the numerous objects around him, was full of gratitude to Providence;

and when the signal had been made for a midshipman from each ship, and they had copied the orders, the different captains read the following:—

“ Vanguard, off the mouth of the Nile,
2d August, 1798.

“ Almighty God having blessed his Majesty’s arms with victory, the admiral intends returning public thanksgiving for the same at two o’clock this day; and he recommends every ship doing the same as soon as possible.”

At the time specified, Mr. Comyns read the prayers, and each ship’s chaplain did the same. The service made a deep impression on the prisoners; and it was remarked by one of them, “that it was no wonder the English officers could maintain such discipline and order, when it was possible to impress the minds of the men with such sentiments after a victory so great, and at a moment of such seeming confusion.”

The Arabs had been looking on at the action, and, like all wise people, declared for the conquerors. You see in life it is just the same all over the world: it is not every man who sticks by an opposition when he can get into office by changing his words a little; and these Arabs, directly they found we were masters, illuminated the coast, as far as we could see, for the three following nights. These were the very men who would have speared us and cooked us the day before.

The 3d of August came, and every ship had been secured but the *Timoleon* and *Tonnant*: they were both dismasted, and could not escape. The *Timoleon* was aground; and her captain, after setting her on fire, escaped with his men on shore. The *Tonnant* refused to submit, and consequently the *Theseus* and the *Swiftsure* were sent to settle the business in another manner; but no sooner did the captain of the Frenchman perceive what was approaching him, than he did what he ought to have done before—surrendered without resistance: for what is the use of giving trouble when nothing can be gained by it? He *had* cut his cable and drifted on shore; but Captain Miller soon got her off, and she was secured in

our line. Captain Berry was sent in the *Leander*, on the 5th, to Lord St. Vincent; and Captain Capel was directed to land at Naples and proceed overland.

For days afterwards we were employed burying the dead: every now and then bodies could be distinguished floating in the bay; and when the morning gun was fired, up jumped one or two to inquire how the action was going on. We were obliged to be quick at the grave-digging line, for the stench was so horrible that we apprehended a pestilence.

Of course, the admiral expected votes of thanks from every body, and presents from half the crowned heads in Europe; but he never expected one which, after all, although a queer gift, was the most suitable; and when Captain Hallowell sent him a coffin made of the main-topmast of the *Orient*, which was fished up with a part of the wreck of that ship, adding, that when he (Nelson) had finished his military career in this world, he might be buried in one of his own trophies, he had it stuck up in his cabin; and I had to dodge round this death-box sometimes in the dark, not much to my liking or my amusement.

Although four ships escaped us at the time, sooner or later we had them all. We picked up the *Généreux* off Cape Passaro, when I was in the *Foudroyant*; and the same ship—but I was on shore in Sicily with the admiral, he was a lord then—took the *Guillaume Tell*, of eighty-six guns and one thousand men, and she was the last remaining ship of the French fleet which was in the action of the 1st of August. To be sure those Frenchmen picked up the *Leander*; and well the fight was kept up. Captain Thompson fought right well, and we had the satisfaction, when we took the *Généreux*, to repay them for some of their incivilities to Sir Edward Berry and the crew of the frigate which Monsieur Lejoille—Mr. Jowl, as we used to call him—and his precious gang of robbers were kind enough to practise on their prisoners.

Thompson had his reward in the sentence of the court-martial which took place on the 17th of December 1798, at Sheerness; and what the captains said was all true—

“ that the gallant and *almost unprecedented* defence of the captain of his Majesty’s late ship the *Leander*, against so superior a force as that of the *Généreux*, is deserving of every praise his country and this court can give ; and that his conduct, with that of the officers and men under his command, reflects not only the highest honour on himself and them, but to their country at large,” &c.

CHAPTER III

The black flag was hoisted ; the schooner bore down,
And the merchantman yielded to fate. — *Sea Song*.

Now let us change the subject for a while. I’ll relate a yarn of my messmate, Tom Toprail, about a ghost : we sailors are rather partial to those gentlemen.

“ It’s many a day,” says Tom, “ since I actually saw it — but I have seen it often in my memory since. We had been sent down in the *Glasgow* to *Rio*, about some pirating business which had been carried on there by some of the Spaniards ; and we soon set that affair straight, and recovered one or two men, the only survivors out of some fifty or sixty belonging to different ships, the crews of which had walked the plank or been bundled overboard. It is no use being able to swim ; nothing saves a man but being either a cooper or a barber : one chap was saved because he played the fiddle. This was old Jack, a fellow who could twist a yarn, play a hornpipe, or sing a stave. I believe he had been concerned in every mischief under the sun : he had belonged to a vessel out of *Liverpool*, and was shipped as painter, fiddler, barber, seaman, and carpenter : he could do any thing, or do nothing : he was either employed for the ship, or stopping the other men from doing their duty by playing and singing ; he had been thirty years at sea.

“ The vessel was bound to the *Plate**, and was picked up by a Spanish schooner — a regular black-flag man — a long distance from the coast. The *Liverpool* ship was

* *Rio de la Plata*. — Ed

called the John and Sarah, and had on board only two popguns and twelve men.

“ When the schooner hove in sight, all hands said their prayers ; for the captain of her was one of your rum and religion men, — a kind of bodies who take to the spirit and only leave the ghost of a bottle — people fond of having the *Cove of Cork* as dry as the Goodwin’s at low water ; in short, a regular methody parson, — always kicking up the greatest row against the sin they mostly practise.

“ Down came the schooner. It was like a hawk at a sparrow ; for the pirate was determined to claw the John and Sarah, and the latter had no spirits on board, excepting what remained in the captain’s bottle. There were two men besides old Jack who winked at the guns ; but their minds ran the same ; for after looking at the barking irons, they nodded at each other, as much as to say ‘ No use ; ’ so they went below, clapped on three shirts and their best suits, and then came on deck to see how the affair was to end.

“ The schooner did not sail under false colours ; for when she was within pistol-shot, she fired a long gun-right smack at the Liverpool ship, and up went the black flag.

“ I forgot to mention — for I may as well spin the yarn from clew to earring — that the captain had his wife and daughter on board. The wife was the only half of any thing that the captain would have spared without much persuasion ; but the daughter was a beautiful creature, just seventeen, and was much more fitted to serve out grog to us old ones on shore, than to be bobbing about the high seas like the buoy at the Nore.

“ When the captain, who had said his prayers, and taken in enough Dutch courage to fight a ghost, saw the black flag, he knew what was coming ; and old Jack said, he really did believe that no man that ever was born more cordially hated his wife and loved his daughter. Her name was Sarah ; for she was christened after the owner’s wife ; and she was as mild as a West India night, with eyes as bright and as blue as one sees in the skies in these climates.

“ The black flag sobered him in a moment ; and the crew, as they came aft with terror marked in every face,

soon convinced the girl of their fears. There was not a man in the craft that did not love her, for she never spoke without a smile on her face: and who is there that does not love a fair face which seems to smile in happiness? But as to the captain's missus, there was not a seaman on board that had not said more than twice that she was the devil in petticoats, and would lead the whole batch of them into destruction.

"Sarah looked in all their faces, but could get no consolation from any; on the contrary, they all looked at her as the victim most likely to be sacrificed. Ay, then it was that her large dark eyes were filled with tears, and her red lips grew white with fear: she was a prize worth the risk of the pirates, for she was above all price. Old Jack was the only one who said a word; and that was, 'Cheer up, miss, perhaps they won't murder *you*. But as for your father! — Howsomedever, if they have an ear for music, I don't think they'll feed the sharks with my carcass.'

"This was meant for consolation, and Jack said it kindly; but somehow it had just the different effect. By way of separating the sheep for slaughter, the pirate hove-to to windward, and fired at the ship as if she had been a cask put out to practise upon. The colours were doused in a moment, but still the pirate fired. They lowered all their sails on board the Liverpool ship; and this seemed sufficient, for the pirate edged down close alongside, and hailed the ship to send the captain on board. The boat was lowered directly, and the skipper went down below. — There was a scene, thank God! I never saw; and I hope old Jack painted the picture a little too strong. — The daughter pushed the mother away for the last embrace: she clung to her father; no nipper round a messenger, when it's 'thick and dry for weighing,' ever held faster: and even Mrs. Belzebub, the wife, quarrelled for a kiss. And there they would have remained, had not the schooner, which had edged a little to windward, fired another shot, which passed through the cabin and cut the she-devil nearly in half. Old Jack swore that he saw her come out of the companion untouched, and fly away to leeward with the fore-topmast studding-boom, her petticoats spread cut

like a sail, and she diving about like a Mother Cary's chicken in a gale.

"The daughter, seeing the mother dead, fell upon the body and fainted: whilst the father, with some hope still left in him, jumped in the boat, in which was old Jack, and went on board the schooner. Here they found the deck crowded with armed 'men; fellows with faces like devils, and with their right arms all bare, as if ready to butcher the crew of their prize.

"The captain of her was one of king John's men — four feet nought in his shoes, and about as broad as he was long. He spoke English as well as any of us, and he began, before the captain had time to take his hat off, or lift up his leg as he made a bow, —

"'There — none of your civility. Come here. Where is your ship from?'

"'Liverpool.'

"'Are you the captain of her?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'What is your cargo?'

"'Here are the papers, sir.'

"'Who asked you for papers, you mongrel? Bring a pair of scissors and cut the fellow's tongue out, for it is no use to him if he can't answer as he ought. Do you hear there?'

"Before you could say Jack Robinson, his tongue was out, and he left bleeding on the deck.

"'Hand here a hot iron,' said the pirate: there was one in a moment. 'Stop the bleeding for a time, for he must not die yet; and one of the crew opened the poor fellow's mouth, and then rubbed the hot iron against the sore.

"'Here, you odd-looking scarecrow!' said the pirate to old Jack; 'look there!' pointing to the mutilated captain, 'and mind *your* tongue. Who are you?'

"'I'm barber, carpenter, cooper, fiddler, and seaman.'

"'Any thing else?' — 'Nothing else.'

"'What's her cargo?' — 'Don't know, for I never saw.'

"'Your eyes don't seem of much use to you; so —'

"Old Jack interrupted, 'Except to shave and to *saw*.'

"'Ah! — How many men are there on board?'

“ ‘Twelve men and two women.’

“ ‘Whew!’ went the pirate. ‘Who are the women?’

“ ‘The captain’s wife — but she’s killed by the last shot, and his daughter.’

“ ‘Daughter! Here, go off,’ said he to one of his crew, ‘and bring the rest on board, women and all. And, do you hear? throw those three chaps overboard; but keep this fiddler.’

“ Jack had not time to look about him, before his ship-mates were struggling in the grasp of the pirates, and three distinct splashes in the water told that the captain’s orders had been obeyed.

“ ‘Let her forge ahead a little,’ said the captain: for, do you see, even his black soul was willing to be removed from the murder-spot. They put the helm amidships, and she shot ahead in a moment. Jack could not look over the side — he was afraid to move a foot.

“ The boat soon returned. The pirate’s orders had been observed to the very letter: two women were in the stern sheets, and both apparently dead — both covered with blood, while the rest of the crew sat between the thwarts of the boat, looking as if the pirate need not give orders for their execution. They came alongside: the low deck of the schooner was hardly higher than the boat’s gunwale; a kind of door was opened, and the crew of the ‘John and Sarah’ were told to get on board. What they thought when they saw the captain stretched on the deck writhing in horrible pain, Jack could not tell; but they walked by the mainmast of the schooner, where old Jack was standing, as one sheep follows the other, and as if hope could be increased by their herding together, or as if they could resist the better should the butchers fall among them.

“ ‘Hand up the women!’ said the captain.

“ In vain poor Sarah had wound her arms round the body of the mother; the strong arm of the pirates soon separated the living from the dead; and the daughter’s scream, when she was torn from her parent, reached the ear of her father. He started upon his feet; his swollen face, his burnt lips, quivering with pain, and seemingly endeavouring to give utterance to his wishes. Sarah rushed into his arms, saying, ‘My father! my father! —

oh, save me ! save me !' Her hair had got adrift from the combs which had bound it together, and the long locks hung in disorder over her shoulders ; she had hidden her face in his neck. She clung to him as if to fix her hands so that no mortal could separate them.

" The scene, terrible to any to behold, had operated on the crew of that fatal ship, who knew the sweet disposition of the daughter, and the better qualities of the father ; and although their own situation was sufficiently awful, they forgot themselves to weep for her.

" The captain of the pirate stood close to the companion unmoved, his eyes gloating over the beautiful features of his captive. Death was a sight so common to him, that he cared not how often he saw it. The woman — and such a woman — awoke every bad passion ; and he resolved to gratify his wishes, not at all unconcerned at the anguish he occasioned the dying man. The captain of the prize still remained standing, his eyes fixed upon his wife and daughter, one dead, the other worse than dead.

" ' Here,' said the pirate, ' take that girl to my cabin ; and, do you hear ? ' (he whispered something to his nearest man) ' and be quick.'

" ' Ay, ay, sir,' said the man in good English. To another he spoke in Spanish ; and the two came to take hold of the girl. As they stooped, the father kicked them so violently on the head, that they both fell back : this was the last effort of a parent to protect his child.

" ' What ! ' exclaimed the pirate captain, jumping round the companion, and seizing the girl in his grasp. Lord love you ! it was like a terrier snapping a rat. He lifted her like an infant, although she clung to her mother ; and when that hold gave way, she took a fresh nip at her father's hand. He leant forward, more from weakness than intention ; but as he fell, he stuck his knife up to the hilt in the pirate's shoulder. The blade remained in, for he never withdrew it ; the exertion, however, had overpowered him, and he fell on the deck.

" In a moment after, he was thrown overboard, together with the bleeding body of his wife.

" The man who acted as surgeon stepped forward and withdrew the knife. It had made a good wound, though

not serious. In a quarter of an hour it was dressed. During which time he never uttered a word about pain, but gave directions about the prize and the prisoners. The latter were all lashed with their hands behind them, and seized to the bits near the mainmast, old Jack and all. The vessel was ransacked and plundered ; every thing small and of value was removed to the pirate ; and then a few men were sent on board, all of whom but two were English, and she made sail away.

" It was now getting fast towards sunset ; and old Jack never thought to see it rise again. However, he kept his spirits up better than the rest, because he had been already saved when passion was the strongest. He thought the blood-letting would cool the captain a bit ; but he was wrong there, for it only made him the more riotous. He had been down in his cabin, and the half-stifled shriek of the girl had been heard ; but shortly afterwards all was silent. The men fore and aft the decks were sharing out their plunder, and never even heeded the prisoners, who now had a little time to whisper to each other, not only their fears, but their hopes of escape. The man at the helm seemed to have command of the schooner, which was slipping slowly through the water ; and darkness was coming on. When the prisoners saw the captain coming on deck, their hearts were in their mouths in a second.

" When a man is lashed and can't get a fling for his life, it's a kind of *fortune de guerre* that no one envies. Poor devils ! they expected more than they wanted ; no less than to walk the plank !

" When the captain came on deck, he stood listening at the companion : he called his boy and whispered in his ear, and the boy went down below, and the prisoners had their eyes fixed upon the murderer. He first looked at the compass — all sailors do that when they come on deck, and any man on board a man-of-war might know the purser from one of the lieutenants without the uniform : one looks at the compass, and then at the sails ; and the other looks at his feet, to see if the lower deck dry holy stone dust has stuck to his shoes.

" But to heave ahead and to tell about the ghost.

" Well, after the captain had looked about him, he sees

the prisoners, and he came close up to them. He looked at the first who was nearest to him, and said he, —

“ ‘ What ’s your name ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Richard Brookes, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ How long have you been at sea ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Eight years, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ Did you ever cut a man’s throat, or pick his pocket ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Never, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ Can you swim ? ’ said he pointing to the water.

“ ‘ Yes, sir. ’ ”

“ ‘ Which do you choose to do, — commit a murder, or —— ’ pointing to the gangway.

“ Brookes remained silent.

“ The captain gave a nod of his head, and one or two of the men came aft. They seemed to understand the business : one tied a piece of canvass over poor Brookes’s eyes, whilst the other placed a broad plank which was on the booms over the taffrail to windward, the end projecting over the boat astern. Brookes was then cast off, his hands loosened : the captain walked aft, and they saw Sarah placed on the companion ladder ; her hands tied behind her, her dress almost torn from her shoulders, and her head turned towards the stern. Brookes was led blind-folded to the plank, along which he walked, the two pirates keeping him straight. No sooner had he passed the taffrail, than two other men lifted the plank from the deck, and Brookes slipped overboard ; he screamed as he fell. Oh, it must have been dreadful for those poor fellows left behind to hear Brookes’s voice gradually growing less and less as the schooner increased her distance, shrieking for mercy. The evening was almost calm, at least there was little wind, and the craft, built like a wedge, slipped silently through the water. At last the sounds grew fainter and fainter, and then ceased altogether. He was a strong swimmer.

“ The only remark the captain made was this : ‘ I wonder if the pilot-fish are on the look-out ; for their masters will have a feast to-night. ’ Those fish always find the food for those sea-devils, sharks ; and whenever you see the little coupee blue and white fish, you may be certain the large one is near at hand.

“ There were six more to finish, including old Jack and great was the pluck shown by all of them.

“ ‘ Will you swim, or commit a murder ? ’ said the captain to William Hindmarsh.

“ Hindmarsh had a wife and family, and was a quiet well-disposed man ; but he was none of the bravest, — at least so his ship-mates fancied ; and there’s no doubt that the thoughts of his wife and his little daughter must have made him think that, joining the pirates, which he took the last question to mean, might give him an opportunity of returning perhaps without the sin fastened to his soul ; so he answered, ‘ Commit the murder.’

“ ‘ Then throw that girl overboard ! ’ said the captain.

“ Hindmarsh’s face grew in an instant into a resolution none could mistake. He said, ‘ May the Lord have mercy upon me ! for I will rather die ten thousand times.’

“ ‘ Indeed ! ’ said the captain ; ‘ then we will take you at your word.’

“ ‘ Bring the scissors and the hot iron.’

“ ‘ I’ll do it, sir, but spare me.’

“ ‘ Then do it ; ’ and he was cut loose. He walked aft to Sarah : every one of his shipmates called out to him not to touch a hair of her head ; but when he got near her, he made one spring, cleared the way to the taffrail, and giving a leap, was overboard and drowned.

“ It was at this moment that a vessel was seen on the larboard bow ; for it was not quite dark, and just the last glimmer of daylight. The man aloft had seen the stranger : it made life shorter to the rest, for they were bundled overboard, every mother’s son of them, but old Jack and Sarah. The latter was taken below and put to bed, the boy being left to watch her. All sail was now cracked on the schooner in chase, the decks cleared of the plunder, and every thing got ready for a fight. When this was done, old Jack was called.

“ ‘ What do you say you can do ? ’

“ ‘ I’m a carpenter, a cooper, a barber, a fiddler, and a sailor.’

“ ‘ Jack-of-all-trades and master of none, I suppose,’ said the captain. ‘ Here, boy, hand up my violin. And do you hear, you old scoundrel, take care how you play,

for I shall judge by that of your other callings: and do you mind — ' and he pointed to the gangway.

" This was the hardest trial of them all. When a man's life depends upon his playing well upon such an instrument as the violin, not a little nerve, steadiness of finger, and presence of mind are necessary. Well, Jack said that he could play very decently, and that he had no fears before about his *execution*; but now, you see, it is like enough he thought about both, in the way of being bow-strung, or *a-bridged*, like Hindmarsh. It is for all the world like telling a sailor to make his defence before a court of captains, when it is a hundred to one if the sight of the skippers does not take the talk out of him if he had any to lose. What's a foremast-man's lingo to the first lieutenant's, or perhaps his own commander's,—a man Jack has been taught to obey, and to stand with his hat off when he speaks to him on the quarter deck. All that ought to be altered, Ben; it's not giving the sailor a fair chance; I know that, for I was present when Johnson was tried.

" Well, old Jack took the fiddle, and he strikes up 'Moll in the Wad' with so much spirit that these devils in trowsers began to dance. Then he changed it to the hornpipe, and away the fellows went along the deck, with a double shuffle and cut, just as light of heart as if the eleven men they had just murdered had never been amongst them. Even the Spaniards took the cigars from their mouths to laugh; and that proves how he carried away the heads and heels of all present: for a Spaniard never leaves off smoking, not even in bed, I believe. As for laughing, they are like Turks, — they think laughing a kind of work, and they don't like work.

" ' You 'll do,' said the captain. ' When you have done with him, my lads, give him some supper and let him go to bed. We want a cooper and a barber, and he 'll do well enough.'

" They lost sight of the chase about an hour after, and it came on to blow fresh: the sails were managed, old Jack said, in proper seaman-like style, for the captain understood his trade in all its branches. About midnight they kept a bright look-out, but they could not hit upon the stranger; and when morning came, she was out of

sight. They then altered the course, and stood towards Rio Janeiro.

"Old Jack was determined to make the best of his situation, and lay by for a good opportunity of slipping his cable. He was soon introduced into the cabin to shave the captain. There he saw Sarah, who was always in tears, and endeavouring to make him understand something; but the pirate made the girl sit before him, so that Jack could not shave him and see her at the same time. About a week after the capture, and when they were approaching the land, a large ship was reported when the captain was getting his chin mowed; up he jumps, and leaves the two together.

" 'God forgive me!' exclaimed Sarah, 'but I wish that fearful man were dead.'

" 'Wait until we get into harbour,' said Jack.

" 'Alas! I have not the heart to do it,' rejoined Sarah, 'or I could find an opportunity.'

" 'Nor I the inclination to have my tongue cut out and thrown to the sharks.'

" 'Jack, Jack! you would not see me ruined?' said Sarah.

" 'No, miss; certainly not, if I could help it.'

" 'Oh! gracious God, what shall I do!'

" Here she was interrupted by the return of the half-shaven captain. Old Jack was stropping the razor, and Sarah, as usual, crying.

" 'Come, Jack, finish your job as quick as you can, without cutting my throat. But,' said he, as he continued singing, —

'The sea is deep, and the man that's slim,
And carries good weight of bone,
Will have a long and a silent swim,
If he swims as well as a stone;

and I don't much think Hindmarsh has got down, for he has lots of toll-gates in the shape of sharks to pass; and, like those on shore, old Jack, there is no trust.'

" As you may suppose, this made old Jack think that he had been overheard, and he very seriously thought of doing the job. But old Jack was no fool, and he knew that the chief mate would soon claim Sarah and despatch

him ; and thus arguing that no good would come to either, he finished his work, whipped up his soapsuds and strop, and toddled off forward among his companions.

“ He had already become a great favourite, for he was always useful and always willing ; he sang a jolly song, played a good tune, and could scrape his legs along the deck like a clown at a fair ; besides which he never lost his temper.

“ ‘ What ’s the ship, lads ? ’ said he.

“ ‘ What ship, old boy ? ’ said one of the pirates ; ‘ there ’s nothing in sight.’

“ ‘ Then what the devil made the captain jump up when I was shaving him ? ’

“ ‘ Why, he sometimes does that when he wants to hear what is going on in the cabin ; for he has got another berth which communicates with the after cabin, and he went down there just now.’

“ Old Jack turned away quite sick, and looked at the water alongside, as much as to say, ‘ My days are numbered, and you are to be my grave.’

“ Two days afterwards they made the land about Rio. Jack had shaved the captain every morning, and his fears were rubbed off. Twice the captain left the cabin, and instantly Jack communicated to Sarah where he was gone ; so he went on the other tack, saying, —

“ ‘ The captain is a very nice man, miss, and will make you very happy : I dare say he loves you dearly.’

“ To this Sarah could not reply, for her heart was overflowing with grief. ‘ Never, never ! ’ was all she said.

“ Well, the schooner got safe to her anchors, under Spanish colours ; and the first thing Jack saw was an English man-of-war close to the pirate. ‘ My bobs ! ’ thought he, ‘ but I ’ll do it now ! ’ Sarah had never left the cabin, and was very ill indeed : poor soul ! she had got as thin as a marline spike. The captain was on deck, and Jack said as he passed, ‘ Here ’s an English man-of-war close on board of us.’ She sprang from her bed-place, and tried to rush on deck : old Jack caught her, and said, ‘ Get back — leave it to me.’

“ ‘ Will you do it then ? ’

“ ‘ I ’ ll try,’ said Jack.

“ Down came the captain. ‘ Sarah,’ said he, ‘ you must jump up and come on shore.’ She looked astonished, as if all hope was gone. ‘ Go on deck, old Jack ; and when she ’ s dressed, I want you to shave me.’

“ Jack did as he was desired ; for he was no match for the pirate, even with a razor in his hand. He looked at the Glasgow, for he could not keep his eyes off her ; and this was noticed by his shipmates.

“ ‘ It is no use, old Jack,’ said one : ‘ she ’ s going to sea directly ; they are heaving round now, and the anchor is nearly a short stay ; so don ’ t stand making faces over the taffrail—trudge away for ’ ard.’

“ It was evident that the poor fellow was well watched, and that although he was within hail of succour, yet he had no chance of making himself heard ; for had he begun, his voice would have been gagged in a second. He heard the merry notes of the fife as the men worked at the capstan to the stamp and go, keeping time with the music on board the Glasgow ; and when the ‘ Away aloft ! ’ was shouted, away went the hands scudding up the rigging to obey the orders. Jack saw the ‘ let fall ’ obeyed ; he saw the topsails at the mast-head ; and as the Glasgow was close up to the pirate, he heard the first lieutenant call out ‘ Ship the bars ! ’ and hailing the forecastle, he said, ‘ Let ’ s know when the anchor is up and down.’ Jack was then standing by the mainmast, with his shaving apparatus ready, with two men, one on each side of him ; and he knew that they were placed to hinder him from hailing. They were stout men ; whilst old Jack was as thin as his own razor, and as weak as West India swizzle.

“ ‘ Send the barber here,’ said the the captain.

“ Old Jack went down with a beating heart and shaking hand. The captain had his shirt-collar open ; whilst Sarah was dressed all ready to go on shore, in the very newest bonnet saved from the plunder. She gave Jack a look which, poor fellow ! he understood well enough. He placed his box upon the table, dipped in the brush, and lathered the bull-throat of the pirate. He took the razor and began his work : his hand trembled and he cut the

lip ; the blood began to flow — the sight of it restored him to more confidence. ‘ Up and down, sir ! ’ he heard distinctly from the Glasgow ; then ‘ Thick and dry for weighing ! ’ He drew the razor across the captain’s throat, and nearly severed his head from his body. In an instant Jack was overboard, and one of the pirates after him. He swam well — his pursuer also. Jack hailed : the boatswain saw and heard ; the boats were hooked on for hoisting, one shoved off instantly, and the pirate had just placed his hand upon the back of his victim, when the boat saved them both. The story was told in a minute, and expedition used in both vessels. The pirate had cut her cables and was making sail ; the Glasgow weighed and fired right into her : all exertion was useless ; she was captured, anchored, and Sarah saved. The dead captain was buried on the shore, close to a large tree ; and I was one who dug the grave and placed him in it.

“ As the vessel was under Spanish colours, it was requisite to inform the authorities, and to claim the vessel legally ; and this, with the ‘ *poco, a poco* ’ gentleman, requires time. Jack never held up his head ; he thought always of the act, which every one justified : but it was at his heart that he felt uneasy. ‘ Tom,’ said he to me one day, ‘ I think my mind would be easier if I went on shore to the grave and stuck up a cross.’ ‘ We ’ll get liberty,’ said I. So we did, — our captain was a Christian, — and there was not a man in the craft who did not honour old Jack for the thought. We were landed at the town, and had leave to remain until nine at night, when the boat was to be on shore for the liberty-men. We got to the grave about sunset, and we sat down by the tree. It was a beautiful evening, and the water washed the shore without a ripple : every thing was still as death, excepting the chirping of the birds, the noise of the crickets, and the buzz of the mosquitoes.

“ Jack sat by the tree, his face covered with his hands, saying his prayers. I did not disturb him, although I saw the twilight was fast going, the clouds rising, and night almost at hand. About eight it was dark, — dark as pitch. The lightning and the thunder began, and Jack awoke as

it were from a dream, holding the cross in his hand. He turned to me ; but I was no man then. He said, ' Come and place it, Tom, at his head—I killed him in cold blood—come.' I could not stir : I trembled like a leaf and I remained seated.

" ' Why, what ails you ? ' said he ; ' he's dead—dead, and cold, and buried—there ! ' A flash of lightning came at the moment, and I saw something move on the grave ;—ay, I saw the eyes look fiercely at him, for he was the nearest ;—and he saw it too, and trembled. At last he got near the grave, and placed the cross on the head. Another flash came ; I saw the body without the head carried away ; a growl succeeded ; the cross was thrown down ; old Jack fell prostrate on the grave, and I ran back to the town, and never spoke until we had got on board."

CHAPTER IV.

'Tis unmanly to chatter behind people's back,
But 't is pretty well known that the lady's a crack ;
Besides, if those things about beauty be true,
That there is but one Venus, why, I say there's two. — DIBDIN.

BUT to return to my story. After the battle of the Nile I grew an inch taller. At every place we were looked upon as conquerors. Mr. Davison, the agent, had medals struck in gold, silver, gilt metal, and copper. I had a silver one,—the admiral got it for me ; and I keep it at home, screwed up in the canvass, as bright and as new as the day it came out to us.

It was on the 22d September that the Vanguard, none the worse for her shot-holes—for they, like the medals and crosses, are the badges of bravery—came in sight of Naples. It was here we saw the first fruits of our victory. The bay was crowded with boats, full of thousands of lovely creatures, all waving their handkerchiefs, all kissing

their hands. Music was playing in all directions ; and as for flags, there were enough to have supplied the fleet with bunting for three years. To look upon these gaities, and the loveliness of that bay, was indeed a sight worth seeing,

The *Alexander* had arrived before us, and the whole of liberated Italy, at least the coast about Naples, seemed to have got into boats to welcome Nelson. As we neared the anchorage, Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the squadron of boats, and came alongside. I had seen *her* once before, but I never saw any woman look more lovely : they made a *Venus* of her afterwards.

No sooner did she get on deck, than she embraced the admiral, and fainted. There was the devil to pay, for the King was coming on board ; and although we were three leagues from the anchorage, his Majesty had come out to shake hands with Lord Nelson, and call him his deliverer. The best of all the sights, however, was to see the *lazzaroni*, as they call the mob, all coming near the ships with bird-cages, and letting the little creatures have their liberty. What the birds had to do with it I don't know.

Lord Nelson's birthday occurred shortly afterwards ; and then it was that he became so disgusted with the whole batch of idlers, that he called them a country of fiddlers, poets, fiesies, and scoundrels. He was right : he knew them well, for there they were, doing nothing but squalling about the streets, or twanging a guitar, or seeing the dancers at the big theatre. The first time I went in the pit, as they call it, of the St. Carlos, and saw the women standing on one leg like so many adjutant-birds, and then twisting round and round like a weathercock-man in a squall, I thought to myself that it was just for all the world like naked women, and I got as red in the face as a boiled lobster.

The Neapolitans were all alike. The King did nothing but shoot, and hunt, and kill boars. The Queen — I heard all kind of stories about her — was no better than she ought to have been ; so that we were in a pretty mess, and I was glad enough when in October we sailed for Malta. The French had it ; but we were going to see if

they could live on that rock without food. Gozo surrendered a week after we had shown ourselves; and we left Captain Ball to finish Malta, and returned to Naples. Here we embarked 5000 Neapolitans, and landed them at *Leghorn*; and had there been a shot fired, I think they would have tipped us *leg* bail.

Once more we returned to Naples; and it was about this time that one General Mack and General St. Philip marched to meet the French, at the head of 32,000 men. They fell in with 3000, and all hands used their legs. There never was such a set of cowardly rascals. Although they only lost forty men in all, yet they contrived to leave behind — not honour, — they had none of that, — but their tents, baggage, ammunition, and all. This left the high road to Naples open; and in the town there were plenty of idle fellows ready to get up a mutiny, which they call a revolution. So, on board the ships we began to get ready for a start or a breeze. I knew the admiral expected passengers, for I had orders every day to have the cabin separated with bulkheads, to run screens along the deck, and so on; and every night the boats were sent to a small opening, and returned on board deeply laden with gold and silver, and paintings and jewels, to the amount of two millions and a half.

On the night of the 21st of December, the admiral directed that three barges should be in attendance at the place. It was blowing pretty sharply and there was a heavy sea running. Of course, I was there: I steered his barge that night. We were at our station; but we saw no one to give any orders, and we lay bobbing about waiting for news. About half-past eight, it was as dark as pitch. We heard the admiral hail, and we pulled in directly. First of all comes a stout chap, rolled up in as many cloaks as would have covered the starboard watch of the Vanguard: he was looking about him in all directions, and was very anxious to get away. Then comes another fat thing, I could not make out what it was; then the admiral, — faith! I knew him. No sooner had we cleared the coast, than I recognised the king and queen through the disguise they wore. They had escaped from their

subjects, and were indebted to Lady Hamilton and Nelson for their delivery. Well, I thought to myself that crowns were pretty coins — but great weights. Here was a sovereign, a man who a month before was the idol of his people, for they bowed as he passed, — nay, some of them even crossed themselves, as if good fortune awaited the glance of a monarch ; — and now, here was he in an open boat, and a rough sea, protected by foreigners, afraid of his own countrymen, and looking to each dash of the oar as providing for his retreat ! I began to think, that it is a great consolation for a man to be contented in that station of life unto which it has pleased God to call him. So I fancy myself ; and I am just as happy in spinning the yarn of my life, as if I were bedizened in gold, and made to attend upon a king.

It is no use my running up the log of all we did at this time, because I don't exactly understand it ; but this I know, that I saw the Prince Caraccioli dangling to the fore yard-arm, and pulled round the frigate with Nelson and Lady Hamilton in the boat. I shan't say a word about that execution. I do not like to think of it ; for every one says it was an *error* of Nelson's. As I can't bring myself to believe he ever committed an error, as an officer, — mind, I say, as an officer ; and I can't say that his lordship acted. — But no matter. However, the affair reminds me of the ghost ; for about three weeks afterwards, when the King was on board of us, we saw the old prince rise from the bottom of the sea ; and that gave his lordship a shock which all the guns in St. Elmo never could have given. A boat was sent to get the body and to bury it ashore ; but I'm blessed if it did not nearly create a mutiny. When the cutter's crew was called away, only two men got in the boat ; and when, after much calling and starting, we got all of them in the boat, it was quite awful to see how the poor fellows clapped their oars in the water, and tried, when they took them out, to stop the effect they had produced. When they got near to him, even the midshipman did not like it, and the boat kept pulling round and round the corpse, like a cooper round a cask. No one liked to touch it, for they had all

seen it hung ; and as it rose with the swell of the sea, it seemed to surge towards the land, from which it had been treacherously taken. He was buried on shore ; and some say he walks about Naples every night, and that on the anniversary of his execution he wears a rope round his neck.

We landed our royal cargo on the 26th, having experienced a most riotous gale of wind, during which one of the princesses was taken ill and died in Lady Hamilton's arms.

Now I'm not going to talk like a philosopher ; but this I must say, that although the great people have been pleased to abuse Lady Hamilton right and left, yet, I say, she had more heart, more courage, than a whole regiment of Neapolitan soldiers. She was a wonderful woman ; she did not know what fear was. Some say her heart was naturally revengeful.

Nelson was now made a duke in Sicily, His title was Duke of Thunder,—for Bronte means thunder,—and we used to call him Thunder and Lightning between decks. And there he was a duke ; whilst I, who had served in every action with him, from the time he fought the bear until he hung the prince, was a coxswain ! I might have been a warrant ; but what's a gunner to a duke ? but, perhaps, if I had been a duke, I should never have known the delight of writing my life ; so I am, as I always was, contented with my station.

I won't talk about Malta ; but I'll just say what made Nelson quit the Mediterranean in 1800. It was because Lord Keith was appointed to the command, and Sir Sydney Smith had a squadron in those seas not under the control of Nelson. I came all the way home with him by land ; and Sir William and Lady Hamilton were with us. We had an Italian, who taught me a little of his lingo ; and I in return made an English scholar of him. He had been on board the Foudroyant with us, and I made a man of him. He was a capital cook, and used to dress those "tobacco-pipes made easy," called maccaroni, so well without breaking them, that I have known him put 120 fathom the length of a cable, down his throat, and

stow it away in the tiers of his stomach, without one bend riding over the other! Now, some who don't swallow quite so well, may perhaps disbelieve it; but, after all, I only said it went down through the *mouth* of the tier without a *bight*,—and that's not so bad either.

We went through Germany; and of all the sights I ever saw, I never clapped eyes upon any thing the like of this. At Prince Esterhazy's there used to be 100 grenadiers, all six feet high, who waited at table: there was not a man of them that could n't have clapped me in his pocket, and my head would never have come clear of the hole.

They wanted to shove one of your long-togged gingerbread coats on me; but I did n't want any cloth *tails*;—had n't I one of my own to cover my stern? “No,” said I; “we sailors are all fair and above-board,—no disguise about us: here you see our shape and build, and no mistake; but if you were unrigged, and had nothing over your mast-heads, and no paint on your hulls, I'm thinking I could thrash any four of you.” I must say this for them,—they stuffed me as if I had been a turkey for Christmas.

They made as much of the admiral as if he had been their king. After this we got on towards Hamburg; and it is not for me, who ever received kindness, to say one word about his lordship: but that woman!—Ah! that was it. I never shall see any thing like her again: and yet sometimes, when one walks over Westminster-bridge, or goes to the fair, we see faces that the whole world could not rival. Then, to look at their feet, when a breeze takes their canvass a little aback, or keeps it shivering like a topsail lowered for reefing! This I know,—for I have been east and west, north and south,—that in no part of the world are women to be seen like those of our dear little island. Lord bless them! I love them all.

CHAPTER V.

Such havoc, such slashing,
Guns firing, swords clashing,
The battle grows warm :
Shot on shot quick are pour'd in,
Then grappling and boarding ;
Man to man, arm to arm. — *Sea Song.*

WHEN we arrived in England, never was such a reception given to any man as was given to the admiral. We landed at Yarmouth in 1800. Every ship in the harbour wore her colours, and the mayor and his corporation (he was a plaguy fat man, and that's the reason they called him both, which was very personal) came out to welcome him : and all hands went in procession to church. When night same in, they lighted it up with bonfires and fireworks, and other combustibles. Through every place we passed, the same signs of joy took place ; and when we got home, there was the ear ready to listen, the eye to drop a tear, the arms to embrace : but although Nelson's heart was once hers, it was now evidently that of another.

I was met by little Jane ; and when I held her in my arms and kissed the dear little creature, and thought of past times, I felt as if I could have been either married or transported (they don't always mean the same thing) to any body to be the father of such a child.

When the admiral called me, he looked at me as if he envied me, for his happiness was gone for ever — he never recovered it. Before we had been on shore a week, there was an evident coolness between him and Lady Nelson : it was not the same thing as formerly ; she was often in tears, and he was restless and unhappy. He used frequently to kiss little Jane, and once said, "Honour is a fine bauble, glory is a great name, but innocence and youth are worth them all !" At last the coolness grew daily more evident. Nelson was never at home to dinner ; he no longer listened to the voice of his wife ; her words were not sweet in his ear ; and at the expiration of three months

he left her entirely. Jane overheard the last words he ever said to her ; they were added after he had taken his last embrace : " I call God to witness, there is nothing in you or your conduct that I wish otherwise ! " No ; it was his own fault. I can bear witness to her unceasing love, admiration, and affection of him. It is hard, very hard, when a woman knows her husband is the first man in the universal world, and dotes on him, to see him loitering in the room of another ; to be left unprotected, because a more beautiful woman happens to fix upon him. Ay, ay, I remember it all : it made me unhappy ; it made Jane unhappy, for she was removed to the house of Lady Hamilton ; but as she was petted and caressed by her, she soon got reconciled. Lord ! that woman would have made the devil in love with her if she chose, for she had the sweetest voice that ever whispered mischief in a mortal's ear !

Fortunately for us all, Lord Nelson got his blue bunting at the fore, and was appointed second in command under Sir Hyde Parker in the Baltic. We sailed in the *St. George*, but afterwards changed into the *Elephant*. We started from Yarmouth Roads on the 12th of March, 1801. There was a difference of opinion as to what we were to do, and how we were to set about it ; but Lord Nelson was all " for taking the bull by the horns," as he said. I remember I was in the cabin when the different plans were proposed. Nelson was all for the short-cut. " The measure," said he, " might be thought bold, but the boldest measures are sometimes the safest."

It was on the 29th of March, the wind whistling merrily from the north-west, blowing a double-reefed topsail breeze, that we weighed, in order to pass the Sound. Nelson led the van : his flag was on board *Foley's* ship, the *Elephant* ; Sir Hyde Parker the centre, and Admiral Graves the rear. The passage of the Sound is about three miles wide ; and the castle of *Elsineur*, and close to it that of *Cronenburg*, on the Danish coast, command more than half-way across ; whilst the guns from *Helsinburg* could reach over the spot where the shots from *Elsineur* would fall. So that, go which way you would, either one side or the other, or mid-channel, the shots were sure to whistle over our heads ; and they

must have been bad marksmen to miss us all, for we had fifty-one sail with us, and out of this number sixteen were ships of the line.

We were going into action now with stone walls, where we had no mast to fire away, and give three cheers as it fell. The *Monarch* went first; and no sooner had she reached mid-channel, than a hundred guns, and mortars by scores, opened upon her. The shot fell like hail; but they did no damage, and were more like a Turkish salute than an angry fire. It was only fit to be laughed at; for no sooner did the admiral perceive that the Swedish shore never fired, than our fleet hauled over that side, keeping out of range of the Danish guns: and although they blazed away during the whole time of the passage, not a man was touched. In the evening we were all at anchor between the Island of Huen and Copenhagen.

No sooner had the fleet anchored, than a council of war was held on board Sir Hyde Parker's ship; and a lugger which belonged to our fleet was seen standing in-shore reconnoitring the enemy's position. It was no joke to see such a line of galleys, fire-ships, gun-boats, line-of-battle ships, radeaus, pontoons, with large batteries, and such like, extending nearly four miles; but I heard Nelson say, "he wished it had been eight." We had got so used to fighting, that we thought nothing of half-a-dozen batteries. We had to buoy the channel to get at them, for the Danes knew how to throw every obstacle in our way, — and we knew how to remove them.

I remember, when I told this yarn to Jack Halyard, who was in Howe's action, and who was one of your regular barge's crew (such a chap! with the handsomest face and the largest quid in the fleet), says I to him, as we sat at our mess-table, whilst we were emptying the kid of grog, "I must have some biscuits, or I shall never make you understand this action without I place the batteries and the ships. This big one stands for Copenhagen, — and this other represents the middle ground: it's about two leagues from the city. This," said I, as I dipped my finger into the kid, "this represents the channel between the middle ground and the town. it's called the King's

Channel, and is deeper than this allowance of ours. I wish we could fill it up: you see I have to put my fingers such a way down before I get enough to mark a channel. — Well, along this channel the Danes had got their line of defence, as close to the shore as possible.

“They had nineteen ships there; there they are, nineteen of them: those are the floating batteries, and these round ones are the crown batteries. — They are artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour; and this one, the largest, had sixty-six guns. There — there it is, all right!

“Well, on the 1st of April our fleet anchored here, off the north-west end of the middle ground; and I — for I was Nelson’s servant then — assisted at the signals, lent a hand to hoist the old flags, ‘prepare for battle;’ whilst Nelson went on board the Amazon, commanded by that brave fellow Riou, to take a last look of the ships and their position. He returned at one A. M. and we all weighed.

“Along here,” I continued, making another line of grog, “was a narrow channel between the Island of Salt-holm and the middle ground: this channel we had buoyed. Riou led the way in the Amazon, and the small fry kept sounding on both sides of us. We coasted along the outer ridge of the shoal, — along here, you see, — and we anchored off Draco Point just at dark; the headmost of the Danish ships being about two miles from us.

“Such work as we had on board that night! Lord Nelson was as tired as a smuggler after he has run his cargo, and I was sent for to ask him to lie down in his cot, which I placed on the deck*, whilst he told the clerks what orders to write; and he kept me running up and down the hatchway like a messenger-boy, every five minutes, to see which way the wind was. He was in high spirits, and kept them all alive. He had only Riou and Foley with him; the rest of the captains had gone on board their own ships, but most of them had dined on board the Elephant. Nelson never thought of going to sleep: he kept hurrying the clerks, and asking ‘how the wind was.’ I know I wished it had been very ill and *died* into a calm.

* Southey mentions that all persuasion was unavailing, until Allen, his old servant, used that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume. — Ben Brace is Allen. — Ed.

"At daybreak it was fair. Nelson was up; signal was flying for all captains, and every preparation made. Then came the affair of the pilots. None of them liked being shot at; one fellow was not certain how much water there was here — another thought it deeper there; and between one and the other we might have remained gaping at the Danes till now, had not Mr. Bryerly, the master of the *Bellona*, offered to take in the fleet. He had a determined look that man, and they ought to have made him bishop of marines at least for his coolness. His services were accepted, and he went on board the *Edgar*, Captain Murray, which ship led the way. It was half-past nine when we weighed; the signal being 'to weigh in succession.' The next ship was the old *Agamemnon*. I could have cried like a baby, when I saw her fail in endeavouring to clear this part of the shoal, and she ran aground, like *Troubridge* in the *Culloden*: there she stuck hard and fast; and although Nelson and I d—d the shoal sufficiently to move it had it had any heart, yet there was the old *Agamemnon* out of the action, although every man on board of her worked like a dray-horse. The ship in which we had had so many brushes, and which followed Nelson like a shadow, to be caught by this infernal point and held like a chap in the bilboes! The *Polly-phemus* took her place; but some time was lost, and the *Edgar* was unsupported, and the *Polly* could not manage to reach her proper station, owing to the difficulty of the channel, and the leading ship being too far a-head to serve as a pilot.

"Then away went the *Isis*; she was all right enough, and got to her station; but the *Bellona*, which came next, kept too close to this shoal on the starboard side, and she grounded. The *Russell* did the same thing.

"We came next. Nelson saw the mistake, and that the ships had hugged the starboard shoal too close; so we starboarded the helm a little, cleared the bank, and led the way for the rest. But there were three of the ships already hard and fast. We steered up to our station, being about half a cable from the enemy, and dropped our anchor from the stern: but, had the pilots known their duty, that action would have been fought in the *St. Vincent* and *Nile* fashion,

yard-arm to yard-arm, but those leather-headed fellows did not half like the close quarters — so we were obliged to make the best of it we could. But it was enough to make any man, and much more Nelson, who never could bear to see any thing go wrong, swear like a trooper to find that the Amazon, Captain Riou, and his small squadron of frigates, were obliged to fill up the gap occasioned by the three line-of-battle ships being aground. The Agamemnon was useless; the Bellona and Russell, although within shot, not half close enough; so that the frigates took up the vacant station against the Crown Battery; thus opposing that big battery, which three line-of-battle ships, besides the frigates, had been destined to attack.

“We began to fire away at five minutes after ten; and by half-past eleven all hands were at it, thick and warm. The gun-brigs, which might have teased the Danes a little, were not at hand; the currents and the winds baffled them. Of the whole number only one got into action; and out of about half a dozen mortar vessels, only two could manage to get to their station on the middle ground, and blaze away at the arsenal over the mast-heads of both fleets.

“As we went into action, Nelson saw how his squadron was weakened, and he walked quicker than usual; but as soon as about a thousand guns opened upon us, we were all alive, and we went to work like Christians.

“I was, as usual, placed to lend the signal-man a hand; and I had got one of the admiral’s old glasses under my arm. At first the smoke was so thick, that I ought to have had a tube half a mile long to see clear of the dust; but a breeze springing up, we were enabled to see Sir Hyde Parker’s division trying all they could to come to our assistance. It was useless, however, the wind was right against them, and the current also. Well, I took a look at our mast-heads; and there was the signal, the signal for close action, flying. The flags blew out all clear, and any man inclined to see it had only to look.

“Well then, Jack, I takes my purser’s pump, for the glass was not much better; and there I saw at Sir Hyde’s masthead, as plain as a pike-staff, No. 39. The signal-

lieutenant called for the book, and I tumbled over the pages, — for, thinks I to myself, I have been at this trade for the last five-and-twenty years, and bless me if ever I heard of No. 39 before! ‘Thirty-nine!’ I kept saying to myself, ‘it must be something about sending a boat to communicate. Thirty-nine!’ said I; ‘I’m blessed if this is not something to do with the old Agamemnon!’ for she repeated the signal. What do you think it was, Jack?”

“Can’t say, Ben,” he replied, as he puffed out a long line of smoke, which before this interruption he had been letting off like small guns from both broadsides of his mouth, — “Can’t say.”

“Hang me if I can see!” said I; “why, you make more smoke than a frigate on fire.”

“Avaust there, Ben, if you please! — don’t talk of it — it makes my eyes water.”

“And so it does mine. But guess, Jack?”

“Guess, Ben? — why, then, I suppose it was to splice the main-brace, or to pipe to dinner.”

“No.”

“Well, then, tell us.”

“You’d never guess it, not any mother’s son of you: such a signal to be made to Nelson! — It was, ‘to discontinue the action!’”

“Oh, humbug!” said Jack.

“So I thought. So says I to the lieutenant, ‘It’s some mistake, sir, or we have not seen the flags.’”

“‘Thirty-nine,’ says the signal-man again, ‘or there’s no frogs in France!’

“‘What is it?’ said the lieutenant.

“‘Discontinue the action,’ said I, holding out the book; for I knew he would n’t believe me.

“‘None of your nonsense, sir,’ said he, ‘this is no time for joking. But, by heavens! it’s all right — thirty-nine, as plain as the nose on the admiral’s face. Let’s look again;’ and away he trudged, book and all, to the admiral, whilst I followed with a face as long as a boarding-pike.

“‘What!’ said Nelson, and he wagged the stump of his right arm as if it had got St. Vitus’s dance, ‘is the signal for close action up?’

“ ‘Certainly, my lord,’ says I.

“ ‘Ah, that’s right,’ said he, and I understood his look :
‘keep it there ; do you hear ?’

“ ‘Ay, ay, sir !’ said I.

“ ‘Here, give me the glass for a moment.’

“ Well, he takes the glass, levels it at Sir Hyde’s ship, claps his blind eye to it, and with the gravest face in the world, turned round to Captain Foley, and said ‘I really do not see the signal. Do you hear ?’ said he, ‘nail mine for closer action to the mast !’ and away he walked. We afterwards heard that Sir Hyde Parker only made the signal in order that Nelson might retire, if, owing to the number of ships aground, he might find himself too weak.

“ I never knew chaps fire faster or better than those Danes. The action was gloriously maintained on both sides : but Riou, who saw Sir Hyde’s signal, and whose squadron was cut almost to pieces, obeyed it. He was killed, as he hauled off. It is just as well he was killed, for he would have died of a broken heart had he come out safe. Never was there a finer fellow — no, not in the whole navy, — Nelson excepted.

“ Well, it was give and take for many a long hour ; and the Monarch got the most of the shot. She lost two hundred and ten men ; and the Bellona, from the bursting of her own guns, suffered very much. But on board of the old Monarch, those jolly fellows who were left picked up the pork which a good-natured shot let adrift from the coppers, and they fought and ate like so many mastiff-dogs. Only think, two hundred and ten men killed ! — why, it’s more than any one ship in the navy lost during the whole of the war.

“ The Danes, as fast as men were killed or officers wounded, sent others from the shore ; and never was more gallantry displayed by any nation under the sun. There was one young man, Mr. Villemois, got on a raft, with twenty-four guns, and a hundred and twenty men ; and somehow (for he had no mast) he contrived to get under the Elephant’s stern, and opened his fire. We could not get a gun to bear upon him, and he was amusing himself at our expense. I tried a stern-chaser ; but it went

over and over him. This was no very pleasant business for us who were stationed on the poop; for Mr. Villemois pointed his guns rather high, and one could not look over the stern to see what colour the water was, but smack came the shot popping at us, as if we were birds in September. Thinks I, my brave boys, I will give you something rather heavier than dough-boys to eat; so I went to Captain Foley, and told him the liberties the young gentleman was taking with his cabin windows. He sent the marines on the poop, who, as they fired down upon the open platform of the raft, soon made considerable havoc amongst the Danes, and spoiled their sport a little. Nelson came and looked at her; and after the action, he took Villemois by the hand on the quarter-deck, and called him a brave defender of his country, and a gallant and excellent officer.

"About one o'clock the fire began to slacken a little, and by two it had nearly ceased along the whole line; but whenever our boats went to take possession of the prizes, the Danes, either by mistake (for they never had such an affair as this before) or out of revenge, fired upon them. Even from their batteries on the island of Amak, and from the Trekroner, we received many shot after the line of ships and preams had struck. This occasioned a deal of bloodshed; for many of the preams being dismasted, had got adrift and run foul of one another, so that the shot made great havoc. Nelson got irritated when he saw his boats fired upon, and he resolved to put a stop to such uncivil proceedings; accordingly we hoisted a flag of truce, and Sir Frederick Thesiger was sent with it. Here I saw how great a man the admiral was upon great emergencies.

"I was sent for in the cabin to get a portfolio which I had stowed away when we cleared for action. Lord Nelson sat down and wrote a letter to the Crown Prince; and as I saw how busy he was, and knew every turn of his mind as I thought, I placed some wafers ready. He folded his letter — ay, with one hand much quicker than the ship's clerk would do with both, — and I held out the wafers. 'No,' said he with a smile, 'bring wax and a light: this is no time to appear hurried or informal.'

"The first thing which the admiral thought of was to

avail himself of this flag of truce to remove the ships from the narrow channel. Our flag of truce was answered, and the batteries ceased firing: the signal was made to weigh in succession, and the Monarch, who first led us through the Sound, was now the leading ship out of this channel. She had to pass close to the Trekroner on the artificial island.

“One puff of wind and every stick would have gone over the side, for she was riddled. She struck upon a shoal; but the Ganges, which was close in her wake, struck her on the broadside, as she rounded-to (for the Monarch had only tailed upon the bank), and pushed her off again.

“Our old ship the Elephant stuck hard and fast, and so did the Defiance; and there they remained for many hours. Had the Danes at that moment refused to treat, every one of our ships might have become prizes; for the approach of the Ramillies and Defence, from Sir Hyde’s division, could not have got the ships afloat, which were aground within point-blank shot of the Trekroner. This battery, owing to the want of ships to attack it, was almost uninjured, and at the close of the action had fifteen hundred fresh men to man the guns.

“It’s these little lucky events which lead to greatness. The Danes continued sending their Aujutant-general Lindholm to the London, which ship was at anchor four miles from the town; and the time it required to pull there, and there to consult (for Nelson left the Elephant and went on board that ship to conduct the treaty), gave us ample time to remove from the scene of action. But the affair which hurt the gallant hero the most was the blowing up of the Danbrog. She had been drifting about in flames, and the crew could not extinguish the fire. In a moment not an atom remained of her; and her brave crew, who had so gallantly fought, perished when the battle was over; nor could we, although you may depend upon it we were not backward ‘to snatch a brave tar from a watery grave,’ succeed in saving any.

“The big wigs settled that we were to have our prizes without further contest; and every man in the fleet was tired enough on Good Friday, the day after the action.

We got the Elephant off during the night; but Lord Nelson breakfasted on board of her (he had slept in the St. George); and at last we got all our prizes out clear of banks and shoals, batteries and Danes.

"Then came the weariness which succeeds great exertion; then it was that we forgot our victory in the remembrance of our heavy loss of shipmates. We all know the feeling when we go into action; our hearts are alive to the honour and the glory of our country — hope cheers us on; and although we feel the cold creep of uncertainty as to the result, yet we are animated by the prospect of glory, and of the pleasure of saying, 'That man was at Copenhagen.' But when it's all over, when the rumble of the guns has ceased, and when the groans of the wounded succeed the bustle of an action, then it is, Jack, that we know we have hearts, for they worry us sadly.

"We lost in that battle no less than nine hundred and fifty-three men. The Danes, counting in their prisoners, mustered six thousand short of complement. Our prizes amounted to six line-of-battle ships and six preams. We only sent one, the Holstein, a sixty-four, to England; the rest were burnt and sunk with all their guns on board: and we did not think that was the best way of disposing of them, for it gave us no prize-money. Jack, you know as well as myself, that prize-money is just as acceptable to us foremastmen, as pensions and pay to others; — and we grumbled, and so did Lord Nelson, at sinking ships which might have been in Portsmouth harbour in a week's time.

"Another thing grieved my heart. You know that we have no burying-ground on board a ship; and that most of us prefer a hammock, with a round-shot or two at the feet, to all the humbug of shore-going gentlemen, who hire others to cry for them, and who get a black box mounted on four wheels, with feathers and gimcracks, to carry them to the grave. With us it is a grating and a flag — one splash in the water, and the Lord have mercy on our souls! But when the Danes buried their dead, they made a grand affair of it; and of course it was a consolation to those who were left, to see that, had they died, they would have been buried decently.

“ I happened to be on shore with the admiral when the Danes buried their dead. It was the third day after the action : the whole city seemed to have assembled in the naval church-yard. Young women dressed in white threw flowers over the graves ; thousands shed tears ; and I thought that a nation consulted its own dignity when it thus paid the last tribute to departed bravery. It makes a man feel that he does not die like a dog : it makes a soldier or a sailor conscious that others look on to write his name down in the log-book of memory. When he has run through this life in the service of his country, with a grateful remembrance for all the blessings he may have received, it is then, when the last *shroud* is placed over his mast-head, when he is hove down keel out, that those who moor him for ever in the narrow harbour of the grave, where there is no room required for swinging clear, say, ‘ There lies a man who faithfully served his king and his country ; and they lift their hands, when the clergyman says, ‘ ashes to ashes, dust to dust,’ and pray that he who behaved so well here may find an eternal repose there.”

CHAPTER VI.

The arm that once in firm alliance,
 England's proud standard nobly bore,
 Dishonour'd now, claims no alliance,
 But, faithless, waves in vile defiance,
 And dares to threat its native shore. — *Sea Song.*

I HAVE often turned in my mind the meaning of the words “ luck in life ;” and I am yet in doubt whether fortune cannot be commanded. If we are to wait for its coming, like a midshipman in the jolly-boat when the purser's steward is gone for fresh provisions, I fancy I might wait long enough before I should see Mrs. Fortune, or Mrs. Anybody else, coming to me and killing me with kindness. No, no ; Fortune's steps are like a Jacob's ladder over the

stern of a three-decker : your timid man may have his foot upon it, and fail ; your bold man, when once he clasps it, easily mounts. Yet there's many a man in the navy who is bold, daring, active, clever, and a seaman, and still dies a half-pay lieutenant or a boatswain's mate ; whilst some, who know very little about their profession, have had fathers parliament-men, and live to see their bunting at the main-top-gallant-mast head. But I suppose it is all as it should be ; it all comes right enough at the end ; for when the breath is out of the body, it signifies very little whether a man was an admiral or a Greenwich pensioner.

Yet it must be admitted, that all the reasoning in the world is but cold consolation, when we see an idle fellow lounging about with his hands in his pockets, doing nothing but mischief ; and so preciously stingy, that he would see a sailor stumping about upon a pair of timber toes, and never give him enough to drink the King's health, or to buy corn-plaster. It may be all right, and I dare say it is ; but what I mean to say is, that I don't understand *why* it should be so.

After the battle of Copenhagen, we remained some time in the Baltic. Sir Hyde Parker was superseded, and Nelson continued to set matters to rights in those seas : but before he started, he gave me the longest pull I ever had. He got some information about the situation of Sir Hyde's fleet and the Swedish squadron ; and as the wind and current were against our getting out between the islands of Amak and Saltholm, and most of our squadron touched and stuck fast, Nelson jumped into a boat, and away we pulled, from five o'clock in the evening until midnight, when we reached the Elephant ; and so much used had we become to pulling, that all night long, when we were asleep, we went through the motions.

It was on the 5th of May that Sir Hyde went home ; and Nelson was left in command. The Russians became civil ; the Swedes were mighty polite ; the Danes could not do any thing, and therefore we did nothing in *our way*.

Not long afterwards, Sir Maurice Pole arrived to supersede Nelson ; and we came home in a man-of-war brig to Yarmouth, as his lordship did not like to weaken the com-

mander-in-chief's fleet. I'll just mention a strange business, without any reference to the *Cape*. Nelson was as sick as a youngster who had never been at sea before : and I have heard, that since vessels went by grinding smoke, the oldest seamen alive have become sea-sick again.

It was about this time that Bonaparte was making great preparations at Boulogne to invade England. Every one must remember the precious fright all the old women were in for themselves and their daughters ; and every old mother who wanted to scare her children for any misbehaviour, used to tell them that Bony was coming to take them. Nelson, of course, was looked to ; and the command of the coast from Orfordness to Beachy Head and as much of the French coast as came within those limits, was given to him.

My little Jane, whom I had seen, was now growing up a beauty. Lady Hamilton had taken great care of her, and already she was employed more as a lady than as the daughter of a smuggler. She had been taught to play harpsichords, and, I understood, she spoke French, and wrote a tidy hand.

We could not remain long on shore ; and Nelson's flag was soon flying on board the *Medusa*, for we stood over to Boulogne, sunk one or two floating batteries, and destroyed a few gun-boats at anchor outside of the pier. Bonaparte was making active preparations I believe, and had some idea of coming to London, to see what it was like. But he was nothing of a sailor : and did not know that one frigate in a breeze of wind was nearly sufficient to sink all his gun-boats and rafts ; and that, if he crossed in a calm, he must tow, — a thing rather against expedition.

Although we seamen laughed at the whole business, yet it was right to be prepared : and Nelson never left any thing to chance. Besides, all the old women were certain that the Frenchmen were coming ; and the country was in such a state of alarm, that Nelson thought he had better put an end to all doubts by an attack upon Boulogne. Accordingly, the boats of the squadron, under Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, Jones, and Conn, in five divisions, left the ships at midnight. It was a dark night, and I lost

sight of them as soon as they left us : and there I stood watching for daybreak — which is early enough on the 15th of August. When it came, I saw how the tide and half-tide, the darkness and the uncertainty, had separated them : for one division never arrived at all, another never got into action until after daybreak ; but the rest were at it in the regular English style.

The French, who had been taught their weak points when the Medusa practised firing upon the gun-boats, now fortified every possible advantageous situation : and the boats were chained to the shore. Every boat was defended by long poles, headed with sharp iron, stuck out from their sides in every direction, like the spears in a sea-egg : you might as well have attacked a porcupine without gloves. Besides this edge of boarding-pikes, they had boarding-nettings triced up, and on board of each boat was a file of soldiers. The batteries protected them whilst the boats advanced ; and the beach being lined with soldiers, our gallant fellows had to face difficulties not easily to be surmounted.

No sooner did the Frenchmen in the batteries observe that our men had taken possession of one of their vessels, than they opened a fire upon her, not caring one straw for their own men. It was therefore impossible to bring out any of the vessels, for the fire became so hot directly the flag was down, that the difficulty of unhooking the boat was not to be overcome ; and the boats ultimately returned, having lost one hundred and seventy-two men, without one vessel to show us a victory.

It happened that when one of the boats of Parker's division succeeded in getting on board one of these porcupines, the French made a more than usually obstinate resistance. They defended her manfully, and were cheered and encouraged by a stout-looking fellow, who fought like a tigress in defending her cubs. At last, after many a wound given and received, the whole surrendered but the man who had gallantly stood foremost. He jumped overboard with his cutlass in his mouth, and endeavoured to gain the next vessel : but one of the boats belonging to the division was at that moment pulling between the

enemy's line, and seeing the man, they hauled him on board, although he fought like a devil first, to shake himself from the hook, which the bowman had fixed in his jacket. In he was hauled at last, and he forthwith delivered himself of a cargo of curses in that beastly, snuffling, whistling language, which, instead of coming from the mouth of a man like our good, respectable, round oath, came as if he was forcing it out of his forehead, or driving it through his nose.

It happened that one of the men was wounded in the boat, and was placed underneath the thwarts when this chap trod upon him, or somehow kicked his wounded leg. Jack distributed a volley of words for the Frenchman's selection ; and neither of them would have been welcome in good company : but this seemed to hurt the prisoner more than his captivity, for he growled out in good English, "The devil take you !" Two of the men heard it ; and the officer of the boat immediately ordered him to be lashed, hands and feet, for there was not a doubt, from his good pronunciation, that he was English. When they were returning to the ship, however, although he was frequently spoken to, he never had the gift of tongues again. He said he could not understand a word, and it was "*No comprendé.*" I told old Rattling, when he related me this, that, without being personal, he didn't understand the lingo ; for he must have said, "*Jenny comprende par ;*" which as I was once very intimate with a Frenchman, I knew to be correct.

I was on board the *Medusa*, looking on at the fun ; but when it was reported that an Englishman was taken prisoner, having been the most forward in the service of our enemies, Lord Nelson ordered him to be brought on board to pass round the fleet, to see if anybody could know him. If one thing was hated by our gallant admiral more than another, it was when an Englishman forgot himself so much as to desert to an enemy, and that enemy a Frenchman. He used to tell his midshipmen, "You must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil."

Well, the prisoner was brought on board the *Medusa*. The men were mustered at divisions, and he was passed

before every man in the ship. No one knew him. At last, after going from ship to ship, a man on board the *Gannet*, who was slightly wounded, happened to come on deck, and he roared out directly, "Why, he was a ship-mate of mine on board the *Glasgow*!" and when he was taken on board the *Isis*, he was claimed as a deserter from her.

This circumstance made a great noise in the squadron, and an order was given for a court-martial to assemble on the 19th August, on board the *Medusa*, Captain Gore. The night before the trial the prisoner was removed to us, and placed under the half-deck, with a sentinel to watch him, although he was in irons; — for irons, although pretty safe, are not quite sure.

Lord Nelson was at this time very fidgety about Captain Parker, who had been wounded in the leg, and was considered in great danger. I was sent about a hundred times with notes (for I was then in the capacity of admiral's servant, messenger-boy, and coxswain), and if ever one brave man felt for another, it was when Parker died. Lord Nelson did not get over that in a hurry.

I remember the 18th August well (the day before the trial), for on that day we buried Mr. Gore and Mr. Bristow in one grave at Deal. At that funeral Lord Nelson himself, with eight captains, attended; and when the marines fired over them, that man — he was more than a man! — burst into tears, and felt for the youngsters as if they had been his sons.

It was the evening before the trial, and after the burial, that I came on board for something the admiral wanted, when I heard some of the men talking about the prisoner, and, being curious, — at least I was, when I had a pair of eyes, — I sheered over the starboard side of the half-deck, and there, who should I see but Tackle! What d'ye think of that? Well, how strange are the accidents of life! After I had somewhat forgotten the horrible death of poor Jane, and had endeavoured to brush away the tear that would come, here was this fellow thrown in my way again, and likely to receive the punishment he so well deserved.

"Ah!" said he; "what! are you come against me?" — "Not on one account," said I, "but as the murderer of my sister!" I was in a fury; but our conversation was stopped, for the sentry interposed, and said he had orders that no one should speak to the prisoner. I went to the cabin, got what I was sent for, and, when landed, ran to the room in which Lord Nelson was seated.

"What's the matter?" said he, for he saw that something was the matter with me.

"Oh, my lord," I said, "it's he! it's he!"

"He!" replied Nelson with great coolness. "What! are you mad or drunk?"

I drew up; I never was drunk or neglected my duty; and Nelson, when he saw how worried I was at the words he had used, said, "Never mind what I said, Brace; tell me what is the matter, and rely upon it, if I can serve you I will."

"The deserter, my lord——" said I.

"Has he escaped?" said the admiral, as he jumped from his chair.

"I wish he had, my lord!" said I.

"Why?"

"He is the murderer of my sister, and the father of the poor child I brought to your lordship!" Here I stopped, for I was a little overcome.

Nelson got up and walked about the room. It was near six in the evening, and he was waiting for his dinner; his left arm was at work, and he remained silent and thoughtful.

"What can be done, my lord?" I said.

"What would you have me do?" he replied. "Would you have me screen a murderer, a deserter to the French? — it is impossible! The order for the court-martial is given — he has been claimed by the Isis, and the only way in which it is practicable to interfere is by handing him over to the civil power for the murder. Then he will be hanged without redemption, whereas at the court-martial he might escape."

"Oh, my lord!" I said, "it is on account of the child that I would save him: but as a deserter — as a murderer,

although he intended to have shot me, and not my sister, I would hang him like a dog."

"Tell me the circumstance; — never mind the dinner — take it away for half an hour. — Now tell me *all*."

I told him all, from beginning to end, and the reason why I had concealed the truth before, for I did not wish my own niece to be known as the daughter of shame.

"It is the feeling of a man — of an English sailor," said his lordship; "and, when I have said that, I can say no more. To save him is impossible, even if I felt inclined; but a man who has been a smuggler, a murderer, a seducer, a deserter, most richly deserves the fate which the court will award him. I will write this evening to Lady Hamilton, to send the child down instantly at my own expense; and you must make up your mind to await the sentence of the court. Perhaps you may wish to see him; if so, here is an order to Captain Gore, to allow you to remain with him as long as you like, and to remove the sentry from within hearing."

He wrote the order, and, as he gave it me, he said, "I can do no more; he must abide the consequences of his own indiscretion. Go, if you like; I shall not require you to-night." As I was going away, "here," said he, "is a note to Gore, or the commanding officer, to allow you my boat, and not to question you."

I could not thank him, although I attempted to stammer out some words. "Never mind, I see what you would say," said his lordship: "you have a hard duty to do, but you will do it like a sailor and a Christian." I shut the door, and stood bewildered how to act. At last, I resolved to go on board, to tell the prisoner how matters stood, and to urge him to repentance before it was too late.

Captain Gore was not on board, but the first lieutenant opened the notes, and, accordingly, the sentry was removed. The prisoner, I was told, would now be considered under my care, until I called the marine, who was removed to the other side of the deck.

My eyes! no one can tell how I felt! I went down the main hatchway all of a tremor, like a youngster going to

bathe on a cold morning, whilst half the ship's company watched me, and wondered what I could be after. I drew the screen aside, and there was Tackle, sitting on a sail-maker's bench, with both legs in irons; his head was hanging down, and he appeared in deep thought. I did not disturb his meditations; for perhaps he was summing up his long career of crime, or engaged in silent prayer, or looking back on scenes of pleasure, or recalling some happy hour of his youth. In about five minutes, during which it was evident that his thoughts were far away, he remained in the same position, clasping his hands tighter together, and now and then groaning as if heart-broken. At last he looked up in my face, and jumped instantly on his legs: the irons reminded him of his situation, and he sat down with a look of resignation, as much as to say, "Why do you come here to torture me?"

"Tackle," said I, "as far as a man can forgive you, I have forgiven you; but now your last hour is drawing near; to-morrow will see you a prisoner at the court for desertion, and for being taken in arms against your King; and you must remember the Article of War beginning, 'If any person in or belonging to the fleet shall desert, or entice others so to do —' I will not go on."

"No!" said he, as his rough voice came on my ear, "I would rather you did not; moreover, if you made yourself scarce upon this occasion, I should like you the better if possible. This is no part of my punishment, and I might have been spared this."

"Tackle," said I, "I have spoken to Lord Nelson to save you, but he cannot — he dare not!"

"What, Brace!" said Tackle. "Now, if I could only shake myself out of these cursed bilboes, I would very soon see which was the better man of the two: your room is better than your company; — and there," said he, as he spat upon me, — "there is for your kindness! I would rather die than live indebted to you for my life."

I kept my temper, and continued, — "Tackle! why do you continue in this useless manner? Would you die without one man to pray for you? Is this the way to

treat one who came to tell you of your child ? ” He darted upright as if he had been struck through the heart by a musket-ball, and looked me full in the face.

“ She’s dead, Brace, and you know it ! ”

“ She’s alive,” said I, “ and will be here to-morrow night. Think what she will feel, when the first time she knows her father it will be when he is sentenced to die ! ”

“ And Jane ! ” he said.

“ Is dead. In the scuffle with me you shot her ! ”

“ I know it all,” said he, “ for Jacob told the truth. Curses on my unsteady arm ! — I sought to make my escape — not to murder either you or your sister. Now, if I could ask a man I hate so much as yourself a favour, it would be to bring me my child before I die.”

“ It would be better,” said I, “ that she never knew her father ; and then the guilt of her parent and the shame of her birth would be spared her for ever.”

“ Is it thus you would raise a hope, to crush it instantly ? ” said the enraged Tackle. “ Is it thus, when the cup of bitterness is full, you add the only drop to make it overflow ? — But stop, Brace — don’t go : tell me, shall I see her ? Oh ! let me see her ! ”

“ Yes, to-morrow you shall see her.”

“ To-morrow I shall be tried, condemned ! No, I won’t see her. — But, Brace, a word with you ; I’m yet well to do in the world — if you will help me to escape all I have got is yours. You would not see me hung ? Have you no feeling of pride left for the child ? Think of this ! ”

“ If I had the will, I have not the power ! ” and I pointed to the irons. He shook them with rage.

“ If you had the will ! ” said he, with contempt. “ Then, d—n you ! it is my death you want. Go ! — Yet, stop, stop ! ” added he ; “ don’t leave me. Can you do nothing for me ? ”

“ Nothing ! I fear, nothing ! But this I can promise, that I will see you to-morrow : and to-morrow evening you shall see your daughter. I must not stay longer.”

I held out my hand ; he held it firmly in his grasp. It was like the nip of a vice : his little red eyes were fixed

upon me as he said, "I will die like a man and like a Christian."

"I hope so," said I.

"I will," he added, resolutely. "Bring my child to me, and perhaps I may yet live? You shake your head. Is there no hope?" As he said this, he fixed his eyes upon me imploringly.

He loosened his grasp: I ran my sleeve across my face; and as I passed over the other side, I told the sentry to take charge again of his prisoner.

It was now eight o'clock, and I was anxious to leave the ship, for I was rather a stranger on board of her. Accordingly the first lieutenant ordered a boat to be manned, and I was landed.

CHAPTER VII.

The charge is prepared,
The judges all ranged (a terrible show!) — *Beggar's Opera*.

Then, bowing to the chaplain, who had scarcely recovered from the effects that the scene had produced upon him, and looking significantly at the provost-marshal, Peters bent his steps forward by the gangway—the noose was fastened — the gun fired — and in a moment all was over. — *MARRYATT'S King's Own*.

I REMEMBER the dawn of the 19th August, 1801, as well as if it had been yesterday, and better; for somehow the old scenes of my life are fresh in my memory, whilst those which occurred only an hour ago are forgotten. I don't much fancy this cloud, which seems getting thicker and thicker over my recollection: it's a jog from the sharp elbow of that old skeleton fellow that carries the hour-glass, and sometimes forgets to turn it.

The morning broke beautifully; not a cloud was to be seen; and the shingles on Deal beach were not moved by the sea as it silently washed them. The admiral was at the Three Kings, and his room looked over the Downs. I was there arranging his papers, when a gun from the Medusa shook the windows. I cast my eyes that way, and

there was the Union Jack flying, — the signal for a court martial.

Lord Nelson came down about a minute after, and he saw in a second all that was passing in my mind. He sat down and wrote a letter to Captain Gore, which he desired me to take on board before the court assembled; for he was too good an officer to have any communication with any of the captains after nine o'clock, when they were trying the prisoner.

"You need not return unless you wish it," said he; "and if the child arrives, she shall be taken care of until you come back. Did you see the prisoner last night?"

After telling his lordship all that had happened, I withdrew, and got on board about five minutes before the court was formed.

"You know this fellow, then, Brace?" said Captain Gore as he read the letter.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"You may see him now if you like, or after the trial. — Send the sergeant of marines aft. — Oh! youngster; tell the marine officer and the provost-marshal I want them."

I walked away, and the captain gave orders to that effect. Under the half-deck I went. Tackle was dressed as a seaman, and he looked calm and collected; although when he saw me, his face became redder, and he seemed willing to avoid me. As he passed, I said, "Be a man now, Tackle!" He nodded his head and gave me his hand. I followed him into the captain's cabin, where a table had been placed fore and aft, at which were seated five captains. The prisoner was placed on the left-hand side of the judge-advocate, the provost-marshal being on Tackle's left with a sword drawn.

The order for the assembling of the court, the letter from the captain of the *Isis* requesting a court-martial, and the other requisite papers being read, the captains all stood up and swore a solemn oath to administer justice to the best of their power and belief, and they called on God to witness their assertion. I thought it was a solemn vow. This was the second court-martial I had ever attended: the first was when the foreign Prince was tried on board

the Foudroyant, — he was hung on board the Minerva, a Sicilian frigate, that same evening.

I paid the greatest attention to the whole proceedings, and kept an account of the questions, the witnesses, and their answers. The first man called was William Macpherson : his evidence went to prove that Tackle was the man who defended the French gun-boat so fiercely ; that he himself had received a slight wound in endeavouring to make him a prisoner ; that he saw him jump overboard ; and that he could solemnly swear the prisoner was the man.

“ Prisoner,” said the president, “ have you any question to ask this witness ? ”

“ Did you ever see me before ? ” asked Tackle.

“ Not to my recollection,” said the witness.

“ Then I would not give much for your memory,” said Tackle with a sneer : “ I wish you had been burnt in the Glasgow ! ”

I looked steadfastly at the witness, and there sure enough was old Tom, my old Agamemnon messmate ; but how he had shipped a purser’s name I did not then know. But no man does that unless he has deserted, or been left on shore, having broken his leave and *run* upon the books. Thinks I, this is the world all over, one deserter giving evidence to hang another !

The next witness was the man who picked him up. After that, the captain’s clerk of the Isis was sworn : he produced the ship’s book ; showed his entry on board of her as Richard Rawlings ; swore to the prisoner as the man, and showed the R against his name six months previous to the trial, when the Isis was off Guernsey, and before she joined the fleet to act against Copenhagen. Another man, Thompson, a quartermaster, swore to the person of Tackle, that he was his messmate, and that he deserted in February. Here the case closed against him.

“ Now, prisoner,” said the president, “ we are ready to hear any thing you may have to say in your defence. The judge-advocate will give you his assistance, and we will adjourn the court for any reasonable time you may require.”

Tackle looked round like a bewildered man, and I thought he was going to act Bedlam ; but he recovered himself in a moment, and spoke nearly these words. I always said that he was a scholar, and a man who had not only been well educated, but had been in much better company than ever he deserved. He thanked the court for their kindness, but refused any assistance, and was ready to begin directly.

The president said, " We are ready prisoner ; but I think it right to caution you, that after you have begun, it will be too late to alter your mind ; and that the judge-advocate, who is accustomed to aid unfortunate persons in your situation, will lend you the assistance of his powerful talent, in order, if possible, to save you from your present predicament.

" That sounds like a broad hint," said one of the men not a mile from me, " that the members of the court have made up their minds."

" Made up their minds," said another ; " ay, long afore that : it is a fine day, and they want to be off on shore."

" No," said I, in a low tone of voice ; " it is much the fashion to say that justice is never done to a sailor if his captain tries him ; but I don't know how it is possible to swear so solemn an oath, and yet neglect the case. Of course, it is not much in a man's favour being tried by captains, — especially his own captain, who had already found him guilty before he wrote for the court-martial."

After a few minutes' silence in the court, Tackle began : — " Gentlemen of this honourable court, — It would, I know, be the height of imprudence in me, after the evidence which has been brought before you, to stand forward and say, ' I am not guilty ; ' for here around me I see many of my old messmates and shipmates. One of them has known me twenty years since as a seaman on board the Glasgow ; and another has known me under other circumstances." As he said this, Tackle looked at me, and I thought what he said was a hint for me. — " Gentlemen, I feel an inward satisfaction in now confessing my guilt.

The apprehension of death, — and I know it awaits me, — is banished from my mind ; for death alone can relieve me from my sufferings. I need not enter at large upon my reasons for having deserted — there is one in the court who knows that I always was a stranger to fear. It was not the rumour of the probable action at Copenhagen which prompted me to take that step ; it was a wish to return to my wife and family at Guernsey, and once more to try my fortune in that line which had some years previously placed me in independence.

“ I did desert, and I returned to my wife. But short was the prospect of probable concealment : the hounds of justice were in pursuit of me ; I knew I was traced and tracked. I stole a boat, and in that boat, in the middle of the night, made sail for France, without money, and almost starving. I offered my assistance to our enemies, and in doing my duty by them fell into the hands of those who now act as my judges.”

Here Tackle paused for a moment : — “ My death, I know, is certain ;” he resumed ; “ I know what your sentence must be ; and I have only one duty to perform to man before I am in the presence of another tribunal. I do not throw myself upon the mercy of the court, for that I know, would be unavailing : I call upon you as men to do your duty to your king, your country, and your consciences.”

Never, I suppose, was there greater astonishment, than when a man dressed as a common sailor spoke as he did. There was no moving about, first on one leg and then on the other ; no stretching out one hand to take it back again ; but he stood as firm as a rock, and he never faltered or stammered.

I remember it well : when he finished, every man along the decks felt for him. His eyes never had a drop in them.

It was not more than half an hour before the doors were opened again, and we were admitted. The captains had all put on their cocked hats ; not one of them looked up. Any man could see that they had placed their signatures to the order of death, and that they felt like men

for the poor creature who was so shortly to be seen at the place of execution. They had done their duty, as Tackle had desired them; but they could not divest themselves of the solemn feeling which accompanies such an awful responsibility. — "Silence in the court!" It was as still as if no human being breathed. The judge-advocate began: —

"At a court-martial assembled on board of his Majesty's ship *Medusa*," and so on — we all know the form. Then came the list of the members; and then, that, having duly and considerably examined the evidence, and so forth, the prisoner was guilty. The sentence of the court was, "that he should be hanged by the neck at the fore-yard-arm of his Majesty's ship the *Isis*, on such day as the commander-in-chief should think fit to direct."

The prisoner never moved a muscle. A dead silence of a moment followed; when the president, seeing that Tackle did not intend to address the court, rose and said, "This court is dissolved. Provost-marshal, there is your prisoner!" The captains rose, and the court was cleared.

It is odd how such a sentence operates on the crew: it was like the feeling when a man has tumbled overboard and been drowned. An awful silence was observed, and the men spoke in whispers: you might have led them all like so many sheep. The "piping the side," as the different captains left the ship, at length made a break in the stillness; yet they all looked as if one of them was no more.

Before leaving the ship I asked the captain to allow me to see the prisoner; and an order was given that at any time I might see him, although now the provost-marshal never suffered him to be out of his sight. I went to him: he was tranquil, and held out his hand, saying, "It's all over now, Brace; the execution is nothing; but I have something to tell you. I know we cannot be alone now, and I should have told you before. You heard me mention my wife and children? They live at Guernsey," and he mentioned their abode. "They are provided for. But for the one — for Jane's child — I cannot provide: let me see her, if possible. She does not know me as the mur-

derer of her mother, Brace?" and he dropped his head sorrowfully.

"I told him, 'No.'"

"Then I can master my feelings. Can you forgive me, Brace? My mind has never been at peace since the fatal night at Cawsand."

"Since you confess the deep injuries you have done me," said I, "I do."

"I have indeed done you more injury than any other man alive." The clergyman now came in, and I left him.

I came on shore. Lord Nelson knew the result: the whole account, with the minutes of the court, had been forwarded to him.

I was allowed to go to Tackle every day. He was so altered, that his worst enemy would have forgiven him. His conversation was entirely changed, and became serious, praying regularly with the chaplain, who constantly attended upon him. On the very day that the order for execution was issued his child arrived. It was the 26th of August which was to finish the career of Tackle: the order was given on the 22d.

Lord Nelson desired the poor child to sit down, and he told me to leave them alone for a little time. She was then about ten years old, as beautiful as a sloop; was dressed as fine as a quality lady; her dark blue eyes were as clear as the water about Bermuda, and I never saw such a pretty little angel in my life.

His lordship told her that she was sent for to see an unfortunate man who was ordered for execution, and who knew her mother very intimately: that he had expressed a great wish to see her before he died; and he hoped that she would be prepared to be very kind to the poor man. He then asked her if she remembered her father; but Jane knew no other father than myself, for she was an infant when Tackle deserted her mother. Nelson caressed the poor little girl, and by degrees assured her that I was only her uncle, and that she was sent for at her father's urgent request, who was alive *now*.

The child ran to me, calling me her father, and hoping I would never leave her. She clasped me round the neck,

and asked if her new father was going to take her away with him. I would rather have fought a regiment of Frenchmen on horseback than go through that scene. The dear thing wound her arms round me, and said she wanted no other father but me, — no other mother than Lady Hamilton.

Well, the time was come that I was to take her on board. An hour before this the chaplain had told Tackle that all hopes were over on this side the grave, and that the order had arrived for his execution on the morning of the 26th. He exhorted him to consider the awful situation in which he was placed, and to devote himself to God.

Tackle was cleanly dressed, for in that he was somewhat particular; and before I brought his child to him, I told him she was aboard, and that, perhaps, as she only thought she was brought to see the ship, Tackle had better not give her to understand that he was her father at first, but make a kind of acquaintance with her. Tackle agreed, and said, "I can manage myself, Brace. The worst is past; and this meeting will finish my sufferings."

I went upon deck, where the first lieutenant was showing Jane the guns and the ropes, and walking her about for the admiration of every body. Somehow the story had got wind, and every one of the crew came to have a look at Tackle's daughter. I took her by the hand and led her round the fore-castle; and I don't know what the child thought, for she heard nothing else but, "Poor pretty soul! how I do pity her!" Once she asked me if I was going to part with her, for all the strange men seemed to pity her. I took her down the after-ladder, by the first lieutenant's permission, and she was now upon the main-deck, the larboard side, of the *Medusa*; for Tackle had not been removed on board the *Isis*. Only a slight canvass screen hid her from her father; and he, shackled on both legs, heard his daughter asking questions about the fire-buckets, and the handspikes, and the hour-glass, and the pumps. He did not dare move, because he thought the noise of the irons might startle his child; and he had covered his legs, irons and all, with a flag, so that the little girl should not see him as a prisoner. The sentry told me

that never since his born days had he seen a man in such a state ; and when the girl came round on the starboard side, Tackle was as white as a Norway crow in winter.

Well, I drew the screen on one side, and there he was ! His eyes were fixed upon the child with a look of such fondness in them, that the poor thing seemed to like him at once. It is an odd feeling, — I have felt it myself ; children know men who love them. Although such a man may be as ugly as the figure-head of the Neptune, and as fierce-looking as the sign of the Saracen's Head, yet I am blessed if a child who would have screamed at a highway-man, would not run into his arms and kiss his jowl.

"Come, *come* to me," said Tackle, as he stretched his eager arms, and raised himself upon his feet without shaking the irons. Jane ran to him, and he kissed her, and kissed her, but at last he found relief in a flood of tears. "Why do you cry, sir, — why do *you* cry ?" said poor Jane innocently. Even the sentry turned away, and put the point of his bayonet against the gun-carriage, turning it round and round in his hand as if he was drilling a hole ; while I nearly twisted the black ribbon off my straw hat as I twirled it about, and shoved the skull-thatcher from one hand to another. Tackle had got hold of both the child's hands, and was reading every feature of her face ; and the child returned the look.

"This," continued Tackle, "is ten times worse than the most cruel of deaths ! Now would I wish to live, Brace !" said he. I saw that he could not hold out much longer ; so I took Jane by the hand to lead her away.

"Stay awhile, Brace," said he ; "stay awhile ; — why, you have not been a minute, and I cannot part with her yet. Come, my child, once more, and kiss your own ——" He stopped ; but the child, in approaching him, trod upon the irons, the flag was removed in a minute, and Jane, young as she was, knew that the man before her was a prisoner.

"You are the man," she said, "Lord Nelson spoke to me about ; and they are going to kill you. Oh ! father, father !" said she, weeping bitterly, as she grasped my hand, "can't you save him ! can't you save him !"

"I am your father!" said Tackle; and he fell back upon the seat which was placed against the gun.

The child seemed quite bewildered. I was some time before I could get her away, and place her in the boat which conveyed her on shore. There was not a man on board the ship that did not feel for Tackle; and somehow I felt as if my heart had got out of its place; and if at that moment I could have saved him, I am certain I should have done it.

Full soon the morning of the 26th came. The execution was to take place at eight o'clock; and I had been on board late the night previously. He still wished to see his child again; and when I begged him not to desire it, "Would you rob me," said he, "of the only comfort I have left during the short time I have to live? When the time comes you shall see that I'll die like a sailor."

Melancholy, indeed, I felt as I left the prisoner. "It is the last 'good night,'" thought I, "I shall ever wish you. What a thing it is to be cut short in the prime of life and vigour of health! To-morrow by five minutes after eight Tackle will be a corpse! It is now nine o'clock; eleven short hours more, and his race will be run!"

By six o'clock on the morning of the 26th we were on board. Jane was dressed in black, and she was quite sensible of the awful situation in which her father was placed.

Tackle had been removed to the Isis about half an hour after I had left him the night previously, and I found him in a screen-berth the starboard side of the main deck. He was cleanly dressed; the irons had been removed, and he was once more at liberty before his death. He started back when he saw his child dressed in deep mourning and in tears.

"This is horrible!" said Tackle, "and I was prepared for all but this." Recovering his firmness after a few moments, he begged me to kneel with him and Jane. He opened the prayer book; Jane knelt by his side, and I turned towards the port. He read out loud with a firm voice, and was only interrupted by the sobs of the child.

Even the sentinel knelt down ; and we were thus employed when the chaplain arrived. Without saying a word, he knelt and began to read the Psalms. Six bells struck before we had done. The chaplain then left us for half an hour. During this time Tackle spoke much of his wife : he had drawn up a confession of the whole business relative to the smuggling, and he wrote a last parting letter to his wife. As he did this he wept bitterly, whilst Jane was kneeling at his feet and looking at his face. — “ And now, Brace,” said he, “ if I have wronged you in life, I will serve you in death. Take this paper. Stop, I will seal it,” and he borrowed the chaplain’s scal, which had two letters upon it under a crest. When he had finished, he whispered in my ear as the chaplain drew back and the sentry stood at the farthest part of the screen, “ When I am dead and gone, take this to Tapes of Exeter ; tell him from me, that I gave it to you at my last hour, and when men write the truth. But as you would serve a dying man, never read it yourself — never let even your curiosity tempt you to look at one word of it ; I would have it forgotten for ever ; but it is the only way I can serve you now. If Tapes does not assist you when you most need it, show him this. — If he refuses what you may honestly ask, tell him of *this*,” and he put his hand to his neck, “ and that he will not be long after me. This paper shall be of good service to you, or I mistake the man to whom I tell you to show the outside. You understand me ? ”

“ I do,” said I, as I took the packet.

“ You promise me not to read it, Ben ? ”

“ Never,” said I.

“ Except,” he continued, “ Tapes refuses what I know you will never ask unless pressed by necessity or borne down by infirmity. There, take it, and may it repay you for some of your kindness to one who has so seriously injured you.”

At seven bells we began to see through the port signs of the approaching execution. We heard the marines on deck under arms standing right over us. We saw the boats from the different ships putting off and drawing up

on our starboard side, but Tackle looked unmoved at the solemn preparation.

The chaplain came and called Tackle's attention to the fast-flying moments of life. He urged him again and again to prayer; to which Tackle replied, "Sir, I have made my peace with God, and I must now wind myself up to act as a man." He had made me promise to walk with him to the fore-castle, and who was to take charge of the child? The chaplain was to walk before him, I by his side. I proposed, and so did the chaplain, to send Jane on shore.

In the mean time the hands had been turned up, and the bustle of the ship announced that the time was growing towards a close. The boats had now mustered strong, and many people from the shore came off to see the execution. Tackle's character had gone before him, and those whose curiosity led them to witness this scene felt little pity for the sufferer.

After a heartrending embrace, the father was parted from the daughter, and Jane was taken into the captain's cabin.

The provost-marshal soon came: and now the last sand in the glass had nearly run out. Next the marine officer came; the time had expired; and Tackle was summoned.

The bell struck eight: the prisoner knew his last moment was come, for directly afterwards the death-toll began. The bell repeated its dismal knell, and Tackle now rose and walked forward to his execution. We came up the after-ladder: I looked and saw the rope there before our eyes, — from the fore-yard-arm it came upon the fore-castle; the men were at divisions, the marines under arms, the officers present.

The bell now stopped and the sentence was read. Not a sound was to be heard as the captain returned the paper, and the order for the execution, to his clerk. Again he ordered the bell to be tolled. A party of the marines, with their arms reversed, headed by the drummer with his drum muffled, moved from the capstan; then the chaplain walked, reading the burial service; and then came Tackle and myself, the provost-marshal on one side and the mas-

ter-at-arms on the other. The men all bowed as we passed ; I cannot describe the horrid cold shudder which came over me.

The gunner, with the lighted match ready to give the last signal, stood in waiting ; and at each step Tackle grasped my hand tighter. He walked, however firmly, and without faltering. The rope was now placed round his neck, — his hands were fastened behind him, — the shot was affixed to his heels, — the chaplain withdrew, — the men in the waist who were to run him up stood in preparation. A moment after, I heard the word “ Fire the gun ! ” A volume of smoke followed the order ; and when the light wind had cleared it away a little, his body was seen hanging as straight as an arrow in the air.

Tackle died as he had said, “ turning a black face on the world.” When they ran him up, the toggle of course caught in the block : his body nearly touched the fore-yard ; then falling about eight feet, until the rope taughthened, his neck was broken by the jerk, and he never moved a limb ; but his face grew dreadfully dark. Of all the horrors of a seaman’s life, I have seen none to equal this.

I have seen men shattered by shot ; I have stood by my messmates as the madness of yellow fever came over them ; I have heard men rave, and seen them endeavour to tear themselves to pieces ; but I never saw such a sight as Tackle’s death before ; and I wish I could drive it out of my mind, — but I shall never forget that scene — never, never !

I carried Jane in my arms quickly to the gangway, taking care to turn her face towards the taffrail ; and all the way to the shore I kept her eyes from the Isis. When we put her into the carriage to return to Lady Hamilton, the poor little thing seemed more dead than alive, and hardly knew where she was going. Left alone, I threw myself on my bed, and, I am not ashamed to say it, cried like a child.

CHAPTER VIII.

We ne'er see our foes but we wish them to stay,
They never see us but they wish us away ;
If they run, why we follow and run them ashore,
And if they won't fight us, we cannot do more.— *Hearts of Oak.*

I KNEW Tom fast enough when he gave his evidence concerning Tackle, and I did not understand how he came by the name of Macpherson ; so, when I was all right again, and Tackle had been buried a week, I got leave to go on board the Gannet, in order to ask how all this came about, for I had heard that he had been moved from the Discovery to her. I saw him quite another man, under his own name of Tom Toprail ; and said I, when I got near the grog-kid, " Tell us, Tom, about it."

" I was one of the bad ones who ran him up," he began. " I was under a purser's name, for I had been playing the fool at Plymouth in my last ship. I got on shore and broke my leave, and fearing the left-armed boatswain's mate, I, like a precious fool, deserted. If you had seen me, Ben, when the ship had sailed, looking behind me at every step, you would have taken me for a monkey in search of his tail. I entered on board of the Discovery a few weeks afterwards as William Macpherson, and got into court as a witness owing to being, like the devil in a gale of wind, too busy about other people's affairs ; for when the captain asked me if I could swear to the man who wounded me, ' Yes, sir,' said I, ' I should know his red face any where ; and I don't think this is the first time in my life that I ever saw him.'

" Well, Ben, that very day my old ship the Gannet, which had been left cruising off Boulogne, arrived. Captain Conn, who commanded the Discovery, was an old friend of Captain Cotgrave's, who had the Gannet, and he ordered his gig to be manned to go on board her. I did not belong to any of the boats at the time but I was flemishing the ropes down about the mainmast, when Captain Conn was impatient because the bowman did not come

up smart enough ; and says he, ' Here, you Macpherson, can you pull an oar ? ' ' Yes, sir,' said I, as usual, without thinking. ' Then jump in the boat.' Down he came after me, and in one minute I had let the bow-oar fall in the water. ' Give way, my lads,' said the captain : ' in bow forward ! ' I jumped up with the boat-hook, and there we were ranging alongside of my old ship. A man was in the fore-chains with a rope, and he called out, ' Why, here 's Toprail pulling the bow-oar ! ' The first-lieutenant looked over the side ; he saw me also ; and no sooner was the captain on board, than I was called up, and there I stood on the quarter-deck, Ben, as you said last night, twisting my hat about as if I could turn it into a skimming-dish.

" ' How 's this, Macpherson ? ' said my new captain.

" I had nothing for it but to tell the truth. It was of no use spinning a galley-yarn. I told my old captain, that it was the fear of the boatswain's mate which kept me away after I had broken my leave. I told him of all the actions I had been in ; and I told him that a lash had never crossed my back. ' I hope, sir,' said I to Captain Conn, ' you will speak to Captain Cotgrave in my favour : I 'm sure I have always done my duty as a man, and fought as a seaman ought to do.'

" Ben, it was touch and go with me ; and if Captain Conn had not seen me under fire, and when we were hard pressed, I 'm thinking I might have had a pull round the fleet to the tune of the rogue's march : but between those two and Lord Nelson, the R was taken from my name, and the only punishment I had was to be sent on board the Isis to clap on the yard-rope. But I 'm blessed if I lent a hand, for I never tightened my grip ; and I 'm ready to swear a Bible oath that I did not trice up Tackle.

" Well, he's gone, whether you triced him up or not ; and he died like a man. Now he is gone I forgive him ; and all I hope is, that his name will never come back to my memory again. — Weil, Tom, and how has the world used you since we last met, and when we used to sit under the lee of the weather-bulwark and spin yarns, or clap ourselves on the combings of the hatchway, whilst the

other took his station in the tier to parcel our tails? — what have you been about?"

"Why, it's rather hard to say," replied Tom. "I was in the Culloden at the Nile, and looked on whilst you were hard at work: I never knew you were in the Vanguard until I heard that you had never left Lord Nelson. Why, I don't know much what I have been about; but this I know, that I hate a small craft; they are always wet; and while bobbing about the Channel, I don't think I have ever had a dry foot."

"Ah!" said I, "my old messmate and shipmate, you are a lucky fellow to have weathered the boatswain's mate, and the skippers with their cocked-hats on. I'm blessed if ever I shall see a captain with his gold-laced scraper on in a cabin, but I shall think of the business you and I have been concerned in!"

Nelson was now in great fear for poor Captain Parker, who had received a severe wound in that business at Boulogne, and I'm sure I carried a hundred notes from the admiral to Dr. Baird concerning him. When he died, I was sent by Nelson for a lock of his hair, which he declared should be buried with him.

The flag of the admiral, after the execution of the smuggler, was shifted to the Amazon; and in that ship, or rather in that ship's books, for I was generally on shore, we remained until the middle of October, at which time the Peace of Amiens was signed, and we took our leave of ships for a while, and went down to Merton in Surrey, where Nelson had bought a house, which was shared by Lady Hamilton.

The man who fought the battle of the Nile, St. Vincent, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, and one hundred and fifty others, and who was now forty-three years of age, was obliged to take to fly-fishing for amusement. I have been with him, carrying a basket up and down the banks of the Wandle, for hours, whilst the admiral used to be flogging the water to find a fish. He might have been a good one at it when he had both flippers, but he never would have made a fortune as a left-handed fisherman. He was just as active, however, just as much occupied in endeavouring to catch

fish, as he was to catch the France fleet when we sailed about the Mediterranean before the battle of the Nile : in short, whenever he set about any thing, he always gave his whole attention to it.

In this way, always being very busy doing nothing, we went on until the year 1803, when Sir William Hamilton died. He died in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand. I don't know what passed there, for I was not in the room, but I often heard him say afterwards, "I received her from her dying husband." Deaths had been so common in the family, that they bore this better than those which went before him. A man may get accustomed to any thing but living on shore on midshipmen's half-pay, — "nothing a day and find yourself."

It was on the 16th of May, 1803, that the King told the nation he had had a rupture with the Frenchman, and the consequence was, we went to war. Well, there were lots of work in the dockyards : the press-gangs were out every night, and they made a sailor of a man with long-tailed coat before he could change his habits. Ships were fitted out ; fleets were prepared ; Lord Nelson was appointed to the Victory, as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean ; and on the 20th of May we sailed for that station in company with the Amphion frigate.

I have often thought that if they wished to punish an admiral in the next world, the black gentleman has only to appoint him to the command of the blockade squadron, and supersede the dog with three heads. I'm blessed if that would n't be a greater punishment than grilling him inside the gates ! In this life there's nothing half so bad as polishing Cape Sicie, and keeping for months standing in and off shore, eating salt provisions (but I never had much of that), and going week after week through the same operations of tacking and wearing, heaving-to and making sail. Nelson never stuck close to the harbour's mouth to keep them in. He was always for letting them out ; and every now and then he used to send in one or two ships to entice the French admiral to nibble a little ; for he had not forgotten his fishing manœuvres.

Once, when Admiral Campbell stood in on the 23d of

May, 1804, with the *Canopus*, the *Donegal*, and the *Amazon*, to see that all the ducks were safe in the pond, or that none had taken flight during our absence, the French admiral, one Monsieur Latouche Treville, thought this was a good opportunity to make an attempt. Accordingly he got under weigh with two eighty-fours, three seventy-fours, and three frigates, with the intention of catching the little squadron, which had been engaged half the morning with the batteries, whilst they counted the French fleet. Directly Admiral Campbell, however, edged away towards Lord Nelson, who was about nine leagues off the shore, the French squadron turned tail, and went back again. This was the same man who commanded at Boulogne; and Nelson used to say, that he was sent to beat him again, as he beat us at Boulogne. The Frenchman published an account of his having chased the whole English fleet, and that even Nelson had fled before him. How the admiral swore when he saw the Frenchman's despatch! He got a copy of it, and said, "I'll keep it; and, if I take him, by G—d he shall eat it!"

From May, 1803, to August, 1805, Lord Nelson only went out of his ship three times. I began to think that I should grow up in the shape of the rigging, and that I should never be able to walk on shore without tumbling over the stones! Since England has had a fleet, I don't believe that one ever kept to sea for such a time with less encouragement.

As France was not enough for us, we went to war with Spain; and on the 18th of January, 1804, the French fleet made a start from Toulon. The *Active* and *Seahorse*, two frigates, kept sight of them, until the evening before they communicated with Lord Nelson, then at anchor with the fleet off the coast of Sardinia. Up went the signal to unmoor, and then to weigh, and never did seamen dance round the capstan with more glee: we all thought we had got them at last, and out we stood to sea. For ten days we kept off Corsica and Sardinia, and then made a run to Egypt again. You should have heard all those who had been at the Nile talking over that action, saying how we had beat them, and could do it again.

They were not *there*; no, nor off Malta, nor at Naples : a gale of wind came on, and these gentlemen, not used to such hardships, ran back into Toulon. We were every where : off Barcelona, then in Palma ; first north, then south ; until the 4th of April, 1805, when we stood towards Toulon, and fell in with the *Phoebe* frigate. From her we learnt that Admiral Villeneuve had put to sea on the 31st of March, with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. We soon got intelligence that they had passed the Straits, and we immediately set to work. Although we carried sail enough, however, to beat the devil himself, had he tried us on a wind, yet we never got sight of Gibraltar until the 30th of April, and then it blew so hard dead on end that we could not pass the Straits. We ran over and anchored in Mazari Bay ; and, on the 5th of May, the wind having blown its lungs out from the west, took a turn at the east, and out we went.

It was no holiday for the topmen, you may suppose, for we carried sail night and day. On the 15th we made Madeira, and on the 4th of June reached Barbadoes. Here we heard of the combined fleet, consisting of eighteen sail of the line, six large frigates, three corvettes, and a brig. They had been seen from St. Lucia on the 28th of April, standing to the southward. Nelson said he did not believe it ; and he was right. A cursed Yankee swore that he had been boarded by the combined fleet, and that they were bound to Trinidad. "Up helm, my lads !" and away we scudded to the Gulf of Paria : no vessel there big enough to carry a pine-apple. Out again and tried Granada ; nothing there but coffee-bushes and attorneys. Heard that they had taken the Diamond Rock, and were at Martinique. Away we went, and on the 9th heard they had passed the night before to leeward of Antigua. As fast as we got into one place, they were in another ; so, on the 13th, having left the soldiers at Antigua, we steered home again. On the 17th of July we made Cape St. Vincent, and we anchored in Gibraltar on the 19th. The next day the admiral went on shore. he had never had his foot out of the Victory since June 16. 1803.

At Gibraltar we fell in with Collingwood. We were

soon out again ; and after sailing in every direction according to information, we at last joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant, and the next day stood towards Portsmouth. The admiral had been as much shattered by anxiety as a ship by shot, and it was requisite to repair his hull before he set his rigging up for another cruise. He went to Merton, and I got leave for a week to cruise about Portsmouth.

As I have now come to anchor after a long cruise to the West Indies, I will give my opinion about corporal punishment and impressment of seamen ; — because every now and then I run foul of a kind of sea-lawyer, one of the devil's attorneys, and he is always prating to those who will listen to him, and trying to make them believe that they are, like dogs, taken, stolen, whipped, and kicked by every man with a pair of epaulettes, who happens to walk a quarter-deck.

As for corporal punishment, then, I think I may say that it could not be abolished without injury to the service. When the wind is whistling, the rain pouring down, the sea getting up, and the after-guard, main, mizen top-men, and marines are lugging away at the weather fore-topsail-brace, with their eyes all running over with rain-water, and their tails blowing over to leeward, — I say, when it is a dark, dirty, murky, rainy, windy, snowy night, many a man prefers a hammock to a wet jacket. Of course, if these men remain skulking below, the duty will fall the heavier upon the men aloft. Now, it is nothing but the fear of the cat and her tails that keeps such fellows from sleeping ; and if you put them in irons, why you only encourage their idleness. You may make them pick oakum, and that 's all you can do. You may stop their grog, and they will get more than their allowance from their shipmates. You may clap them in the black list, but that is a bad remedy ; nothing breaks a man's heart more than being mixed up with the fellows on that list.

Let them be educated, say some : I say, no, you'll make them worse. Instead of talking of the good old times, spinning a yarn about the Nile, running up one's memory about Nelson, and such like, they would all be squatting about the decks like a set of Turks, with newspapers be-

fore them, settling the affairs of the nation, and talking about that which none of them understand ! Let them alone. Whilst we have officers who are as humane as they are brave, we have little to fear from tyranny ; besides, tyranny can always be stoppered.

Well, then, as to impressment, without being the least personal, I take the liberty of saying, that none of the great people understand the subject at all. Who is to know so much about it as we, who have been on shore, and lugged the man out of his warm bed, to make a sailor of him ? Ungrateful souls ! some of them try to run away afterwards ! as if it was nothing to have board and lodging ; to peck and perch at the King's expense ; to be allowed to fight their enemies ; and to sing a jolly song in the forecastle, when the ship 's under a close-reefed maintopsail, rising over the waters like a duck, with as jolly a gale of wind for a chorus as ever seaman can wish : and then, on Saturday night to have "sweethearts and wives."

Now to the argument. You make a man a sailor ; surely that's something. You house him, you feed him, you show him the world ; and when he gets riddled about his hull, why you give him a berth in that large palace they call an hospital. They talk of registering merchant-seamen, and take a great deal of credit to themselves for it. Why, Nelson proposed it in the year 1803 ; for I remember being taken down to the House of Lords, and hearing him speak to all the lords in the kingdom, showing them plans for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed " that their certificates should be registered, and that every man who had served with a good character five years during the war should receive a bounty of two guineas annually after that time, and four guineas after eight years." I dare say every boy who skulls a wherry has heard that there was a parliament act for any waterman between the age of eighteen and fifty, capable of serving his Majesty afloat, who registered himself, to have a bounty of two pounds a year besides his pay, and not to serve after fifty-five, but to have the bounty. But then, if he deserted, do you see, he was to lose the bounty, and to serve six months

without any pay. That's all fair enough : the man takes the bounty to stand by his bargain ; if he deserts, he ought to be punished, — and if to an enemy, he ought to be hanged. Now, my idea is this : — that to register seamen may be very good for those who have to register them ; but as for any benefit arising out of it, I doubt it. Because why ? impressment is never used except when it is necessary to man ships in a hurry. Now, supposing the registered men are sailing about the wide world in merchant ships, how are you to get them to Portsmouth to fit out the Victory ? Why, you may send your registering gentleman, with old Scraggs the town-crier's bell, from Johnny Groat's house to the Land's End, giving notice ; but how is Tom Wilkins, John Smith, Edward Thornhill, or Robert Potts, to hear him ?

Well, let us say that there are thirty thousand men registered in time of peace : war comes suddenly, and impressment has been done away with. The muster-books are sent for, and out of the thirty thousand seamen, twenty-five thousand are found to be afloat ; some amongst those Chinese chaps, getting stuff about as good as what we get off our hedges in spring ; some at the Fedjee Islands, stealing men's teeth to clap into clubs, and bringing them home as curiosities ! some out in the West Indies working their souls out by drinking new rum ; and some gone to Mexico, to bring home the dollars from the mines, which have never come home yet, and never will.

Well, as I said, it's a war. Out come about a score of privateers from Dunkirk, St. Maloes, Dieppe, and from every hole where the flood tide rises three feet. They snap up a craft here, and they land and burn a house there ; every man fore and aft the country is alarmed ; and all the while there are the ships in Rotten Row without a man on board of them ; whilst, had impressment been the fashion, every mother's son of those idle fellows, who are very busy doing nothing but what is wrong, would have become defenders of their country.

It's all impressment ; for if you fell in with a merchant-ship, and you wanted men, you would not ask if it was Tom, Dick, or Harry's turn ; but a sufficient crew would

be left to manage her, and you would walk off with the rest. If this is not impressment, it is something very like it.

You must have the power to press; and if you have, what do you gain by registering the seamen? What are the real old men-of-war's men to think of that part of the registering which makes a man-of-war a prison-ship for those who, belonging to the merchant service, and omitting to register themselves, are to be sent like criminals to the *Fleet*?

I remember one night we wanted some men at the breaking out of the war in 1803, to man the *Victory*; and as a press-gang was to be sent, I thought I'd go and see the fun. Accordingly, at the time the boat was to land at Gosport, I crossed over in a shore-boat and arrived just at the same time as a magistrate, who was appointed to accompany the gang, in order to prevent any row and to make people open their doors. It was dark, and the men were armed with stretchers, — pieces of wood just as well in their proper places as flourishing about a man's head, especially if he has not his hat on. The lieutenant who commanded the party was one of your steady kind of men who never makes a noise about any thing, but who always gains his point. When we got near a small public-house and heard several voices, he directed his men to stand in such situations as to prevent any escape; and said he, "Take care you don't use any violence, my lads; but if the fellows won't stop, knock them down." We were all in a regular cut-throat alley, and the magistrate, who said he was a peace-officer, did not like our preparations for war.

The lieutenant and two of the stoutest men entered the house, and the chaps inside soon stopped their singing.

"Who are you?" said our officer to one of the warblers. — "A Barber," said he: "and I should like to know what outbusiness it is of yours?"

"You are just the shaver we want. — Johnson hand his fellow out!" — "I sha'n't go for you, or your Johnsons either. I'm an apprentice, and you can't take me."

"Johnson," said the officer. In a moment the barber was saved the trouble of paying his bill, and handed outside, where he would have called "murder," had not one of the men stopped him by nearly committing the act.

"Who are you?" said the officer to another.—"A shoemaker, *sir*." The affair of the barber had rendered him a little more civil.

"Just the very man we wanted to show our chaps how to cover the foremost-swifter with hide. — Johnson —"

"I'm a married man with a family, *sir*, and I understand you can only take sea-faring men. My wife will be ruined, and the children left to starve, if you take me; they are dependent on my exertions. I hope, *sir*, you will consider this, and what she will suffer, poor soul! in her present situation, if you take me on board."

"Ay, you are a civil, well-behaved man; but you have got too many children, and I shall be doing the parish a service by giving you employment elsewhere. — Johnson —"

"Shame, shame!" said about a dozen ill-looking fellows. "You sha'n't take Leathersoles without a fight for it! Come, my lads, one and all! our only chance is a fair fight, for if that fellow takes one by one, we must go without resistance."

Up they jumped, doused the lights, and made a rally. The boatswain's mate, who was with us, gave a pipe; all of our men crowded sail towards the house; when out went the lieutenant, Johnson, Peters, and myself, followed by these ragamuffins, who had nearly killed the officer, and split the head of Johnson by throwing a pewter pot at him. Leathersoles fought like a dragon; but he got a tap on the skull-cap from one of the Victory's men, which made him a bit of an astronomer; for he saw more stars flying about than any man who ever sailed on the Pacific. The rest got away every one of them but the barber and the shoemaker; and we were going towards the boat, when a woman, with about six children, came running after us. The little ones clung to the lieutenant, saying, "Oh, save father!" whilst the woman threw her arms round Leathersoles, and declared she should die if he was taken from

her. The magistrate had topped his boom directly the scuffle began : he was gone, he said, for assistance, although he never rendered any.

The officer spoke kindly, but the woman would not listen to any reason. "Give me my husband!" she said. "Oh! what shall I do! I shall starve — I shall starve! Sir," said she, as she knelt down to the lieutenant, holding him fast round the knees, "if ever you knew what it was to leave your mother — to be torn from your wife — to be compelled to abandon your children to poverty and the poor-house, do not be guilty of this cruelty! Leave me my Tom — it's only one man — and look at these dear little innocents, who will pray for you. See, sir, I shall shortly be a mother again. Oh! what shall I do, what shall I do!" and here she began twisting her hands, and swabbing her eyes with her dress.

The lieutenant was a man, a right good one; he knew his duty to the king, and he knew his duty to himself, and he felt a capsize of his heart at separating those the parson had joined together. "My good woman," he said, "let me take him on board; and to-morrow, if all you say is true, he will be returned."

"Oh no! oh no! he will not. If once you take him, I never more shall see him. Oh, Tom! Tom! can you leave your wife in this situation?" and they rushed into each others arms.

"It's very distressing," said the lieutenant to the midshipman,—"very indeed; a most unpleasant service; and in this case, if we had taken the rest, we might have strained a point and released the shoemaker."

"Oh! do, sir, do!" said the woman; and, as she extended her arms to clasp the officer and bless him, a large pillow dropped from under her dress. She saw that it was all over; so she caught up her burden, and having got a few yards distant, fired a volley of mud at us. She was one of your regular ladies who act mothers every night of impressment. Now, both those lads—for they both turned out to be seafaring men—are now in Greenwich; and it's many a time I have heard them say, that this was the luckiest night they had ever known.

After all, what is a sailor's life, but one of change and chance? Is it not much to say, that a man has been where birds stand upon one leg, and where elephants run about like lap-dogs; where the monkeys pelt you with cocoa-nuts, and the snakes dance to good music? And then, when we anchor at last, and get spliced for a full due, why it is some consolation, when we hear of any news from foreign parts, to know all about the place and the people.

As we rub on through life, many are the strange things we see: some see ghosts, and some ride upon alligators instead of horses, and like the trot: but I like every thing in the natural way; and a spanker-boom in a head-sea is quite difficult enough for me. Then as to pleasure, I have occasionally steered rather wild; but it has been after the duty was done. I never skulked, and left others to do what I ought to have done; and although the cat has whistled over the backs of thousands, not a lash of its tail ever crossed my shoulders.

I remember a gentleman with long tails to his coat asking me one day, "if Nelson, who was so great an admiral, punished severely, or not."—"He did," I replied: "he never made game of any thing excepting his own blindness, and he knew that an example should be such that people would fear its repetition; but he was never cruel." Now-a-days, they want to alter all this: they tell us, if you educate the men, they will have a more honourable feeling, and the cat may be abolished. Now, as I have said, I don't think so. As to education, a seaman gets as much of that in the fore-top, or round the galley-fire, as he wants; and if he's a good man, he never need fear the gratings, either alive or dead; and if he is one who is shutting his eyes when it's "reef top-sails" on a cold night, why he is none the worse for being warmed. They never can do without it, depend upon it. We have got rid of all the tyrants,—and we have had some of them, and then came mutiny and murder: but now, such things can't occur. When that affair did take place, it was all owing to a parcel of sea-lawyers and chaps who

used to get about them and make them believe the mischief was greater than it really was.

CHAPTER IX.

O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain ;
Let me kiss off that falling tear. — *Black-eyed Susan.*

I HAD time to look about me on shore, after the Copenhagen affair — after we had chased the French fleet to the West Indies, and the admiral had given up the command to Cornwallis. The first thing I did was to write to Crimp, and ask him about my cottage, the trial, and the end of that unpleasant business. He told me the proceeds of the house were all sunk in the auctioneer's bill and his own attendance, with the exception of 5*l.*, which I might receive when I called upon another shark of the same name, in a place called Furnival's Inn ; giving a proper receipt, and winding up all accounts between me and Crimp. He added that no tidings had ever been received of Tackle, excepting that he went to Guernsey ; but of his after-life they were in ignorance. Old Tapes was condemned to the hulks. Susan had sold every thing at Cawsand, before the Exchequer, as they call it, had put the government seal on the door ; but the house was seized. She went to Portsmouth, and remained afterwards in a small hut at Gosport. Here she took in needlework, and did all she could to make her husband comfortable during his punishment. She was permitted to visit him occasionally ; and she soon saw — for women's eyes are quick — that he was gradually declining ; his spirits were sunk for life, and no Jacob or Tackle could ever weigh them again.

When I received Crimp's letter, saying that Susan was at Gosport and Tapes in the hulk, I asked Lord Nelson's permission to go down ; and he gave me a paper to keep

me clear if the press-gang should overhaul me. I did not trust to the water for my passage, but I put myself on top of the coach and was down at Portsmouth in a twinkling. I ran along to the Point, and hopped into the first boat, out again the other side, and there was I at Gosport. I knew pretty well what course to steer, and I made as much sail as my legs could stagger under.

I soon got to a miserable row of huts, from every door of which came out half-a-dozen little children, hardly covered with clothes, and all looking as happy as if nakedness was a luxury.

Susan's cottage was quickly found. She was at home, and I walked in. I held out my hand. "Susan," said I, "I have known you from the size of a marline-spike—I have known you from childhood until *now*, and I cannot bear to see you in misery, if I can help it."

She hung down her head, and I saw a tear drop on the floor.

"It was not my fault, Susan," I continued, "that your husband was discovered; it was the boy's evidence which clapped him in the bilboes; and although I knew all about it, yet I would sooner have cut my tongue out than brought you to disgrace."

She looked kindly at me, and I felt all my old love setting my heart on fire. "Can I assist you?" I asked, for I had money. "Come, cheer up, cheer up! it does not follow that a ship must be wrecked although it blows a gale, and the land is not far off to leeward."

We had but a sorrowful meeting, and yet it was kind. Her appearance was altered: she was older, and the slim form of the girl had got broader in the beam. Yet, with all her sorrow, she was herself in many things. She was as cleanly as ever, and every part of the cottage was as well holy-stoned as a frigate's deck; but she had a look of grief which made me melancholy.

She took some of the money I offered, and then returned me the rest. The evening was growing towards dark, when I wished her good-night. I got to the place where I was to sleep all adrift like. I never thought of

the press-gangs; but walked about like a squirrel in a cage, going round and round my room without getting the least ahead.

The next morning I got to Susan's just as the man came to take her aboard the hulk; and I went with her, for I could not leave her. She said, "she was sure that her husband could not outlive the day, and that then she should be a lone widow, without a farthing in the world." I let her go on without interruption, for I knew it did her good, and then she cried and wrung her hands. I'm sure I felt more sad at that moment than ever I did before or since. We were allowed to go alongside, and I assisted the poor creature on deck. We found Tapes evidently sinking fast, and with no probability of ever escaping the dungeon in which he had floated a prisoner. When he gave Susan the paper, I put in my oar, and said, "Maybe it's for your brother at Exeter."

Tapes started, and seemed coming to life again, as he said, "Who are you?" He looked at me a long while, scrutinising my dress, but at length said, "No, no, it cannot be!"

"Yes, but it is, Mr. Tapes," said I. "Crimp wrote me an account of the bad business, you know; and I was not the one to let either you or Susan sink without lending a hand to bale the boat out. Make your mind easy," said I: "you have been punished for breaking the law of the land; but that has nothing to do with the open list up aloft by which we shall all be mustered."

"That paper," said Tapes, "may be of some use in order to place Susan above want."

The poor fellow had exerted himself to speak, but from weakness fell back on his pillow. He could no longer speak, but he grasped the hand of his wife: his lips moved, and Susan leant over to catch the sounds. Gradually these became fainter; at length Susan uttered a piercing scream. Tapes was a corpse!

I was used to such scenes. I have seen hundreds die and killed: but then there was no woman present.

The other convicts had been landed at the dock-yard,

and we were alone in the ward when the surgeon came. He saw in a second that it was all over, and that he could be of no service.

"For the sake of your children, come away," I said; "it is all over! *His* voice has been obeyed,—and, Susan, you know it cannot be recalled! Come, Susan;" and I used a little gentle violence to draw her away. By degrees I got her to the foremost bulk-head.

We landed, and got back to her hut:—ah, it looked mournful enough then; even the children forgot their little prattle.

"Susan," said I, "I'll go on board and see that all is right and proper there with regard to the burial."

When I got on board the hulk, however, they told me the corpse had been buried, which I considered sharp work for the undertakers. I got another cottage for Susan, paid half a year in advance, and the next day, the 2d of September, 1805, I had them all moved to a more comfortable place than they had known since the day of the trial. I waited at Gosport a fortnight; when one day, as I was talking to an old shipmate, he mentioned that Lord Nelson was expected to take command of the fleet again. I went immediately to Susan, and told her of it. She looked at me and cried. I endeavoured to cheer her, left her five-and-twenty pounds, and promised to send her more; and away I started.

CHAPTER X.

Let us take the road :
Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!
The hour of attack approaches ; —
To arms, brave boys, and load!
Thieves' Chorus, Beggar's Opera.

WE had not long arrived at Portsmouth before we heard of the fight (one can hardly call it a victory) of Sir Robert Calder. It's hardly worth my talking about it now; but at that time people enough talked of it. The comparison

was made between Calder and Nelson ; and those who knew the latter, knew that he would never have left the enemy until they had anchored in Portsmouth or taken him to Brest. Why, we used to say, only to take two ships out of twenty when we had fifteen, was going back to the old times of Benbow. But, since the Nile and Copenhagen, we looked for something more ship-shape than lying-to to secure a couple of prizes, and bobbing about within sight of each other for four days, without even the compliment of a salute Turkish fashion. Besides, when they had taken two out of twenty, they might with less trouble have helped themselves to four more out of the eighteen ; because after the capture of the first two, it reduced the odds to eighteen to seventeen ; and what's that but a certainty ? — they ought to have had every man of them, and placed them to make ivory ships and boxes in the prisons near Portsmouth.

I have always seen it the case, that when you allow a Frenchman to gain an advantage at first, there is no man in the world more difficult to beat into quiet behaviour. They are all life and spirits ; they go on like bulls, head down and tail up ; and, like those animals, they shut their eyes to any danger from their enemy. But just cow them at first — just, as we say, take the shine out of them — and when they turn round to run, freshen their way a little by a few raking shots, and they never will face about again. Now here they are very unlike the Spaniard ; you can't get him to go forward so easily : but clap him behind a stone wall, and there he'll remain feasting upon garlic, smoking tobacco, and just as difficult to be killed as a badger in a hole. On sea or on shore Frenchmen are the same. If they can face you well at first, they will give you plenty of trouble ; if you can outface them, they are done. When once one flag comes down, they send chaps to the signal halyards in every ship of the fleet.

After our arrival at Portsmouth we went to Merton. *She* was there, as lovely as ever. She received Nelson ; she loved him, she never lost sight of him ; and when he used to get melancholy and walk in the garden, as if to avoid every body and talk to himself, she used to meet him ;

— and then he was no more of an admiral than I am ; his flag was struck before a shot was fired, and he was walked off like a ship into an enemy's port.

Nelson did not like this shore-going life : he would start up and walk round and round the garden, without stopping, for hours. He put me in mind of that curious little creature the armadillo, who goes round and round, like a cooper round a cask, and seems never to get tired.

I was at work in the garden as usual, when I heard Nelson and Lady Hamilton coming along. Nelson was talking about his unsuccessful search after the French fleet when we went to the West Indies ; and she was comforting him, and telling him that he would yet have that fleet, and that he would return to *her* victorious. I could see them plainly. Nelson had tears in his eyes when he looked at this beautiful creature, and said he, " Brave soul ! if there were more like you, there would be more Nelsons."

I don't know how it is, but it is so ; — the greatest man may be conquered by women. I never saw a foremast man, who was known in the ship, and a brave straightforward fellow, that had not six wives.

It was on the 13th of September, 1805, that we left Merton again. The command of the fleet had been given to Nelson, and I was despatched early in the morning to Portsmouth to set the cabin to rights, so that I did not see the parting between Nelson and Lady Hamilton ; but I heard afterwards that he had some slight jog on the elbow that he might not come back again. I got on board ; and the next morning you might have seen me with my round jacket and Guernsey, all a-taunto, and stuck up as stiff as a midshipman on half-pay steering the barge to Sally Port.

I have seen many a sight in my born days, — I saw the King and all Naples come out to see Nelson ; but I'm blessed if ever I remember to have seen such a sight as I saw on the 14th of September. Every man and boy of Portsmouth (and a precious gang they were, for there was every man from the mayor to the sweeper, and every woman, from the landlady of the Fountain to Sal from the back of the Point) mustered in the streets and along the parapets to see Nelson off. Some of them blubbered like

boiling lobsters ; many held up their hands aloft ; and never yet, I think, since England was England, was there ever such a sight seen. We have had men as great as Nelson, — and one now living, God bless him *! — who have done their duty to their king and their country ; and we have seen them cheered — ay, and they ought always to have been cheered. I remember, while Nelson lay wounded in his bed in Bond Street, after the business of Teneriffe, and the mob came to make him light up his windows, when they heard it was Nelson, instead of following their old pranks, they gave three cheers, and left him to sleep in quiet.

We sailed from Spithead. I think I see the ship under weigh now. We stood out under easy canvass, for there were some shore-boats alongside, with one or two of the wives of some of the crew, and Nelson did not crack on for half an hour, knowing that the distance would soon be made up, and willing to give the poor fellows time to say the last word ; — and we all know, that no sooner has the boat shoved off, than in our hurry we have forgotten to say what we wished most remembered. At last they were off, and the hands were turned up — “ Make sail.” Then it was that the handkerchiefs were waving, the women crying, and many a man felt a downheartedness which did not belong to the crew of the Victory.

We had with us the Ajax, Defiance, Agamemnon, and Euryalus. There was our old friend the Agamemnon sticking to us like a leech ; and it was quite a pleasure, when I looked at her through the glass (for I was made signal-man and coxswain), to think of all the days I spent on board of her ; how many times I had spun my yarns to Tom and others, when the wind roared, and the green seas flew over the decks. There she was ; and she seemed proud to follow Nelson, for she never sailed so well since she was built as she did when she started with us.

On the 29th of September (it was the admiral’s birthday) we arrived off Cadiz, and Nelson took the command of the fleet from Collingwood. There was no saluting

* The Duke of Wellington, who ought, I think, to be called the Grand Duke, or Great Duke, which you like best.

flags, however, for Nelson did not wish the Frenchmen and Spaniards to know that he had arrived: and he was well aware that his name would not exactly tempt them to come out. He, who had always beaten them, was not likely to be afraid of them now. It was round the decks that we might expect the enemy out before long: the frigates in-shore had remarked them bending sails and getting all ready for a start. We knew it would be a hard affair; and every blessed night, when a breeze of wind filled the sails, we heard more yarns from some of the crew than ever appeared in the Gazette. Then we used to turn a stave about some old love affair; and no man who did not know of what stuff sailors were composed, would ever have believed that they were waiting to be shot at like pigeons in a trap, and thought it a pleasure. Why, we got up a playhouse, and acted kings and queens, and such like. It was such fun to see the boys dressed up as girls: and Billy Snuffle, who had as much hair on his face as would make a chafing-mat for the main-yard, used to make himself into a woman by clapping on an old Panama hat, which was jammed into a bonnet, the tails of a swab hanging down his cheeks to look like curls. When he spoke, and screwed up his mouth like a monkey in pain, out came a deep voice which would have done for the first lieutenant in a gale of wind. Nobody would have thought, when they saw us all grinning at the show, that we were expecting every day to stand to our guns, and perhaps to bundle all the actors overboard, and carry half the spectators to the cockpit.

Sometimes, however, the bravest fellow will have unaccountable forebodings that unman him. I was going along the forecastle one evening, thinking myself that either an arm or a leg would part company before I had my sailing orders for the next world (for I never expected to go to heaven with all my limbs), when whom should I see perched between two of the guns, and looking as cast-down as a chap before punishment when he tows a line alongside of the master-at-arms and sees the boatswain's mates and their cats, than Bob Matson!

There was not a finer fellow in the whole fleet than Bob

Matson. He was a fore-top-man; a regular dare-devil; always in danger; the first to volunteer for any work except swab-wringing; and a man who took his allowance of grog at sea, and his pleasure ashore, as well as any man in the whole service.

"What cheer, messmate?" said I. "Why Bob, you look precious down in the mouth. What's the matter lad?"

"It's all over," said he; "I shall never see my little Fanny any more!"

"See whom?" said I.

"See my child!" said he. "She is about three years old now," he continued; "and when we were fitting out at Portsmouth, there was not a man in the mess who did not love her. You know, Ben, she used to pull our tails and laugh; and, Lord love her dear little soul! I did hope then to have seen her many and many a time before I went to Davy Jones's locker. It's not for myself I care the value of a quid; I'm used to be shot at, and there never yet was a shot fired that Bob Matson would bob at; but now I'm not so certain that I don't wish myself out of this business, which can't be very far off: I feel very queer."

"Why, Bob," said I, "this is not like you;—for when the topsail was blowing out of the bolt-rope, and no one else would go aloft, you would be out at the yard-arm, when every flap of the sail was nearer a finish to a man's life than half the shot from any fleet. To strike your colours before you are hulled, and to sink before you've tried to plug up the shot-holes, is not like you! They say amongst the soldiers, 'Every bullet has its billet.' Well, what then?—why, if we are to go, we can't help ourselves, and we may as well keep our heads up until we are knocked down."

"That's all right enough, Ben, and I used to say so," he said, "but I've been told of it all. Ben, I'm not all right here. I've a weight upon me as heavy as the butcher's block or the armourer's anvil: if I could only shake off that, I should be all right again."

"Well, Bob," said I, "let's hear all about it. I have

heard those Catholics say, that when they make a clear board of it to the priest, they feel all the lighter and happier. Now, if so be that I can clear away any of the rubbish in the cable-tier of your heart, so as to let it run out to the clinch without a bight or a bend jamming in the hatchway, I'm not the man to see a friend run on shore and get bilged without laying an anchor out to windward for him."

"Ay, Ben, it's not my wife and child that I care so much about now, because I fancy that every blessed man, woman, and child, who comes into this world, gets through life somehow. In all my cruisings about the world, I never knew one man die of actual starvation. It's true, some of us have all the rough and none of the smooth. If a girl is not very pretty, she may stand a chance of going on through the tide-way of life without being wrecked when young; and if a man is not a lazy skulker, he must be cursedly out of luck, if in these times, when soldiers and sailors are wanted every month, he starves with the King's allowance: so that my son and daughter must hug the wind, or bear up and make sail, as either distress comes or prosperity shines. As for my wife, she has got a sister who will look out for her; and, as I said before, although I feel as much as any foremast-man can feel at parting with them, yet I'm not afraid of Tom's coming to the gallows or Fanny's cruising at the Point; and if men and women steer clear of these two devilments, why they may muster aloft with the best of us."

"Well then," said I, "what is it, Bob, that has sunk your spirits to your heels?"

"Ben," said Bob, looking me full in the face, "it's not shot that I'm afraid will hit me,—I hope they won't miss me,—I'm afraid of being left alive. Why do you start so? can't you fancy any crime that would make a man so wretched here as to wish to be there?" and he pointed to the forecastle after-port.

"Certainly not," I replied; "and when I see a man like you, who is always foremost in any fun, singing the best song, and dancing the best and quickest step, and

never asking to go on shore, I can't think that so light a pair of heels could carry so smartly a heavy weight of heart.

"That's true enough, Ben ; but I never sleep. I shut my eyes and I rest my limbs ; but a man who has done what I have done never sleeps, Ben ; — he never sleeps, I tell you. The parson may talk what he likes about heaven and hell — where the first may be I don't know, but for the last, Ben, it's here !" and he beat his heart. "I'll tell it you all ; but first let me caution you, that although that Peak of Pico, that we saw not four months back, has cold snow on its outside and looks always calm and still, yet it has fire within it. You'll not say a word about what I am going to tell you, Ben ; — you won't say, when all that's left of Bob Matson is shoved over the standing part of the fore-sheet, 'Never mind thinking of Bob—he died too good a death for a *murderer*!' "

I jumped up, but he caught me by my arm.

"What! would you blow the gaff upon me, Ben? Come, sit down, hear me out ; the devil's never so black as he is painted ; and it may happen that even a murderer may find an excuse for his crime."

I'm blessed if I did not shake like a rope-yarn in a breeze, and my heart went flap against my ribs as the topsails against the mast in a calm with a heavy swell running. Thinks I, this can't be Tackle's ghost, for he touched me ; and although I have heard of these spirits turning a ship right over during the night, and the crew only finding it out the next morning by the sails being wet, and every hammock having a turn in its clews, yet I never believed in those things, and always thought that ghosts turned out like the "Nobody" who drank the boatswain's grog ; so I looked at him again, and says I, "Whatever it may be, Bob, I'd rather not hear it: you've been a favourite in the ship, they tell me ; and I have seen too much of the end of one of your class ever to look on it again."

"The yard-arm !" said he, as he looked up and pointed to the fore-yard-arm, whilst the moon came full upon his

countenance, and showed me a face as white as snow — “ I don’t fear that,” he continued, “ because no one here could bear witness against me ; and if they could, I would shortly be out of the reach of the master-at-arms. But, listen to a short account of my life. I’m only thirty now, — but thirty years look a long time if we are to wait that time ; however, when we have lived it, one hour’s quick conversation, and we may run over every occurrence of good or evil worth mentioning ; for the rest is made up of doing nothing, and the world helping us. It’s no use my telling you my name, — I’m under that of a purser, of course : no man deserts from a ship or commits a crime, and then sails about the world with his proper name in the watch-bill ; if he did, every time the mate mustered him, he would think the hour was come for the court-martial, and he would never be able to look happy when his heart was sad. Ben, there’s hardly a trade of any daring that I have not been concerned in : I’ve been a bit of a smuggler, a bit of a pirate, a bit of a privateer’s man ; and when I was not employed afloat, I looked after the concern ashore.”

“ What concern ? ” said I.

“ Why,” he continued, “ robbing is a trade which requires one always to be practising, because it demands a constant exercise of cunning and courage. Any man may pick up a purse when he finds it on the high road, and no one is looking on to tell who took it ; but when you have to filch it first, and fight for it afterwards ; or this,” — and he drew his hand across his throat, — “ and then plunder pirate-like ; why, it requires some steadiness of heart and hand : so that when I was not concerned on board, I used to keep myself ready, by seizing hold of any one passing by the lonely road ; and if a woman, why, she would at once make a main-topsail haul, and scud for it. But I seldom touched those poor devils, for they never went about with any thing else but a few coppers or a crooked sixpence ; and they used to swear the latter always brought good luck to them, but that their curse, if it was stolen, would make it more unlucky to the possessor. And strange, Ben, as it may appear to you yet I’ll swear I

was so afraid of an old woman's curse, that I would rather have faced ten men than one of those devils in petticoats. What between a little plunder afloat and a little pilfering on shore—for one was a good haul that we made—I thought it was better to cut and run for the States, and tee what honesty would do for a man who had made a little wickedness his prosperity. At the time of which I speak, although French privateers were skimming about the seas, it was not unusual for many people to emigrate; and as I had enough—to be sure, not honestly gotten—to start me in life, I thought that with good health, a strong arm, and constant employment, I might get a clear conscience, and satisfy myself that the little I had taken from each would not in the long run hurt them, but might to a certainty make one or two happy and comfortable.—Happy! Ben; how little I knew what was to follow! how little did I guess what were to be my sufferings! I've been told that, sooner or later, the crime is visited on the culprit, and that, although the officers of justice are slow, they are always sure. In my case I have proved it false: but the constant expectation of a discovery has kept me always on the look-out and ready for a start. Well, it was shortly after one of my most desperate acts that I resolved to ship myself off. I was unencumbered with wife or child, relative or friend. When a man takes to my kind of life, the less he has of any of these, the better for himself and his escape. The gentleman whom I had robbed, with two others of our gang to assist me, was young and rich; he was just married, and his young wife, a nice little craft, was in the carriage with him. I went to the carriage-door, and the man said, 'My good fellow, you can take all I have got, but do not frighten this poor lady.' That was past doing, for she had rolled herself up in the corner, and he held out his purse, which seemed well stuffed with paper and chinked of guineas—for I knew the sound from silver as well as you know No. 1. from No. 9. in the signal-flags.

"May I go on now?" said the young gentleman; 'you have got all I have, upon my honour.'

"My two companions had lashed the postillion's arms

behind him, tied his own pocket-handkerchief round his eyes, and taken him over a hedge by the road-side ; so I gave the signal, and they both came. I told them of the prize and the haul I had made, when one of them said, ' Oh, gammon ! if he is rich, he has got a watch ; if she is young, she has got some rings.'

" ' Well,' said I, ' we have got enough, and we had better let them off.'

" ' No, no,' said they ; ' you be off with what you have got, and make sure of that, and we'll take care of these two birds.' So, without more ado, they opened both doors.

" ' Come, miss,' says Jim, who was one of my two pals, ' let's see your pretty face, we are not going to eat you ;' and he took hold of her hand. ' Ay, I thought so ; rings by dozens ; here's a watch and a chain. Come, Tom, look sharp and assist the gentleman, who'll be all night finding his fob and his pockets. Now, miss,' says Jim, ' let me feel your pocket,—by Jemini, she is a beauty ! and I'll have a kiss before I go : so out with your pretty self—the road's dry, and give me a kiss.' The gentleman, who had quietly submitted to be robbed, rushed like a tiger upon Jim and seized him by the collar. The girl screamed, and I gave the whistle of alarm ; not that I heard any one, but I was afraid some one might be heard. Jim endeavoured to shake off the gentleman, who clung to him faster than ever, and swore he would hold him on until assistance came ; the postilion set up a howl of murder, and Jim had nothing for it but to whip out his knife and cut the gentleman across both hands till the fingers opened. At this he called out louder, ' Murder ! murder !' The woman's voice was shriller and more piercing ; for there's no voice like that of a scream, which might be heard at any distance. Tom, enraged more than Jim, seized the poor gentleman by the collar, and cut his throat. I repeated the whistle, retreating in a contrary direction to the one I knew they would go. Some people heard the noise ; but long before I heard the account or saw what followed, I was off, and never looked behind me.

" It so happened that some farmers, returning from one of the adjoining villages, heard the cries of the woman, and got their horses into a gallop. On hearing the sound, both Jim and his companion started off and came the same way that I was retreating. I saw them stepping out like cowards, or men who knew their lives would be taken in return for that which one of them had committed, and the other had attempted ; and as they both were gaining on me fast, I clambered up a tree, and stowed myself away. They had been looking behind, and had not, I suppose, seen me. There I sat, trembling like a leaf ; and I saw my companions, thank God ! run past. Had not the horsemen been too near, they would have sheltered themselves there. They were well in sight, for, as if it was arranged up aloft that such cruelty should not escape, the moon, which until then had not been bright, owing to the clouds, now came out as clear as the sun on the line. My two companions, having run through the wood, separated ; but some of the farmers, who knew the country, galloped off round the edge of it, whilst two dashed by the tree, cheering each other on. I think there were six of them altogether. I heard the cheer from those who had gone round, and their cry that the rascals had broke cover ; and they called out ' Tally ho ! ' as if they had been hunting a fox. When the sound grew less and less, I got down from the tree, keeping close along a hedge in an opposite direction. Crossing the road about a quarter of a mile from where we had committed the robbery (and, I feared, murder), and, striking right across the country, I got back to London.

" I did not wait there long. With the money I had, I changed my rigging, had my head shaved, clapped a chafing-mat on my skull, and making myself up like a gentleman, got on the top of a Bristol coach, and the next day saw the sea, and with it my hopes of escape.

" In the papers I soon read a full account of the whole affair : — thank God ! the gentleman was not dead ! But when I saw the number of the notes — I had them then about me — published, I almost wished that Jim had done it, and then the dead man would have told no tales. There I learnt that both men had been taken, that my name was

as large as life, and my description fully given, in the Hue and Cry, with fifty pounds reward for my apprehension. Fancy, Ben, how I felt when I read this, which was stuck about Bristol, and, as I looked at it, saw a man who had been reading it also look at me in the face. It was guilt that made me tremble, for I should not have known myself had I looked in a glass. I did not skulk about the town, but I had a room in a good inn; and having a convenient cold, I feared the cool air of day and the bleak wind of the night."

CHAPTER XI.

I thought it no use to repine at my lot,
Or to bear with my perils ashore,
So I pack'd up the trifling remnants I'd got,
And a trifle, alas! was my store.

A handkerchief held all the treasure I had,
Which over my shoulder I threw;
Away then I trudged with a heart very sad,
To join with some jolly ship's crew. — *Sea Song.*

"THE vessel which was to convey us to America," continued Bob Matson, "was all a-taunto, and many passengers were already on board: she was called the Hope. About eight days after my arrival at Bristol we sailed. If I could tell you the delight with which I saw my native land grow less and less to my sight, I would; but no words can convey half the real pleasure I felt when I was once again on the high seas, my passage paid for, my notes safe, my purse still full. I had shipped as a farmer willing to try another country; and from my youthful appearance I was regarded as one of the best on board. And to tell you the truth, Ben (barring that I could not sleep, and was always afraid when any man looked me well in the face, which made me strike my colours at once, and down went my eyes — for I never could look a man full in the face after that night), I felt that I was not the worst-looking man on board.

“ Amongst the passengers was a family of the name of Richardson. The father had seen better days and brighter prospects ; and although in those times the farmers in England were reaping a rich harvest, and becoming every day more and more rich, yet somehow every thing went wrong with him, until he made up his mind to try another country. He sold off every thing he could, and he started with as many spades, rakes, ploughs, &c. as would have done to cultivate the whole of the Bermudas. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and two daughters. Lucy was the oldest ; she was about sixteen, — but such a craft, Ben ! — I ’m not the man to do her justice, either in heart or form. She cried bitterly when we weighed anchor ; and perhaps with the exception of the captain, for the wind was fair, I was the only man on board who smiled inwardly when the breeze caught the topsails, and I heard the first splash of the water as we began to forge ahead. Ay, she seemed to think of her friends and relations, from whom, perhaps, she was parting for ever, — and of the home of her youth, where she had been born and bred. Far different were my thoughts. I left the land where the first object that would reach my eyes was the reward for my capture. I began to hate the very name of an Englishman ; and I thought that one day I might have my revenge by fighting against it. As the wind freshened, and the Hope drew from the land, so in proportion rose my spirits and my security.

“ No sooner had the ship cleared the Channel, than the roll of a cross sea began to work like physic on our passengers, and all hands, Richardsons and all, were on their beam-ends. It had no effect upon me, excepting that I thought it prudent to sham a little ; which, however, wore off wonderfully when the skipper’s boy told me that dinner was ready. I then steered below and handled a knife and fork, and looked at a bit of beef with an eye not at all like that of a sick man.

“ ‘ Why, hulloa, Master Williams,’ said the skipper, ‘ considering you have never been on board a ship before, you get over the sickness rather quickly.’ — ‘ Why, yees,’

said I, clapping on a bit of the inland lingo ; ‘ yees, I have, zur : I have felt very ill, but the farther we go the better I get. I ’ll just trouble you for another slice and rather thick.’

“ ‘ Ah ! I ’m blessed if you ’re not one of the King’s hard bargains — short hair and long teeth ; for I ’m thinking all that crow’s nest on your head is a wig, and at the rate you cut it, you would puzzle his Majesty’s allowance a little.’

“ ‘ Just so, sir,’ said I ; ‘ eating always does me good, and I feel better already.’

“ ‘ I ’m in hopes,’ said he, ‘ that you are quite well already.’

“ ‘ We are all in *hopes*,’ said I, smiling a bit ; ‘ only a little piece more and a potato, and then I can top up with some cheese and biscuit. It ’s blowing fresh, Master Captain,’ said I, ‘ and how far do you think we have run from Bristol?’

“ ‘ Well,’ said the captain, ‘ that is an odd question too for a landsman ; for I have remarked that every passenger I ever carried never asked how far we had run, but how much farther they had to go ; and they never thought of what was behind, but what was before them.’

“ I looked at him in the face, and thought I saw my hangman. ‘ You look,’ said he, ‘ as if you were going to be sick again ; and no wonder, for if you stow so much in the hold, you must expect to be water-logged. Hulloo ! the breeze freshens gaily.’

“ ‘ Crack on her, captain,’ said I ; ‘ clap on a preventive main-topsail brace, — hand the mizen-topsail, that ’s no use now, it only takes the win out of the larger sails’ (we were right before it) ; ‘ and I ’ll bet the skipper’s gold laced scraper against a waister’s shoes that she ’ll go nine knots clean off the reel.’

“ ‘ My eyes and limbs !’ said the captain, ‘ what have we here ? I thought you dropped the Somerset lingo pretty readily ; but now you ’ve parted company with the farmer and shipped on the blue jacket rather smartly.’

“ Alarmed at what I had said, I turned it off with a smile ; and says I, getting a little back towards Taunton

in the words, 'Oh! I 'ze heard zome un who was aboard a ship talk about that at Bristol, and zo I remembered it.'

" 'And zo,' said the captain as he stepped on deck, 'you 've a good memory, and recollect your language again.'

" I was only twenty-two years of age at this time, and I never could keep a stopper upon my feelings. As the sun got towards the water's edge, I got up in spirits, and every lift we got abaft from the rising sea surged me more and more on in security: the only thing I feared was coming across a man-of-war, or being run on board by a privateer from St. Malo's. I had deserted from one of our ships, which I shan't say a word about now; and did not want to go to prison, for then I might have been exchanged and have got back again to England. I had made my mind up, however, that if I was captured I would enter at once on board the Frenchman, and run all chance of the yard-arm.

" It was now near sun-set of the fourth day since we had sailed. The wind had increased from the eastward — the sea was running high — the weather looking worse and worse — thick clouds were settling on the horizon — the scud flew over our heads — and every thing promised a hard gale of wind. I was standing abaft with Lucy, who suffered much from sea-sickness, but she had recovered more than the rest, and, in spite of the shivering which came over her, preferred the air above to the closeness of the cabin, and was leaning over the taffrail, holding on for fear of being bundled from the side as the old 'Hope' rolled merrily along.

" Like all men who lead desperate lives, I soon became fond of women and strong drink. My mind, now more at ease since I was far, far away from England, began to recover itself, and I looked at Lucy as likely to be a useful helpmate when we landed in America. I thought, if I could stick close to Richardson, my ready money might assist him, whilst my connection with his family might make me happier and more resigned to the new life on which I was about to enter. It's not the best time in the world to make love when a woman is sea sick; but in sickness kindness is more remembered than in health. I

soon got into conversation with her, wheedled from her the determination of her father, wrapped her up close in her shawl, removed her fears as to danger, and having shaken hands with her, recommended her to go down below, for the clouds had now risen a little, and some drops of rain began to fall.

“ ‘Come, lads,’ said the captain, who was a stout little fellow and understood the use of every thing in his ship but a quadrant and Hamilton Moore, throwing a piece of wood overboard, and walking along the deck quickly, to keep abreast of it, so as to judge how fast the ship was going, ‘Come, my lads, away aloft to hand the fore-top-sail.’ We were then under a close-reefed main and fore-topsail and foresail, going about nine knots, and rolling about like a washing-tub in a ripple. In those times, Ben, ships making a run of it had not many men, and a squall gave them plenty to do. ‘Away aloft, my lads, one or two of you; the rest clap on the fore-topsail clew-lines and bunt-lines.’ The sail nearly clewed up itself; for when they started the sheets, the wind lifted it, and it required no great exertion to get it as snug as the clew-lines and bunt-lines could get it. The men now went aloft to furl the sails; but as the ship surged, it would every now and then blow over the yard; and I saw that if these fellows, who were not over handy, did not mind what they were about, we should have one or two of them on deck without the use of the rigging, or perhaps a man overboard, in which case his chance of being saved was very little indeed. I was standing abaft; the captain was steering; the hands went aloft. One young fellow, the most active of the crew, scudded up to the topmast head and came down on the yard-arm by the lift, and there he stuck laughing at the others. The captain roared for all hands of them to gather up the bunt first; but whether it was that the rest seemed anxious to lay out on the yard, or that they did not understand the captain, or how to set about furling the sail in a gale, I don’t know; but one of the crew, who had got on the quarter of the yard, before he could secure his hold, was caught by the sail as it bellied up over him, and he was overboard in a moment. Lucy, who as well as myself had her

eyes fixed on the seaman, gave a shriek. I off coat, clapped the helm hard a-starboard, and broached the ship to, luckily without an accident. There was a large grating close at hand, — I bundled it overboard, and only heard Lucy call out, ‘Gracious God!’ before I was in as high a sea as need have swamped a boat.

“It was still light: I got hold of the grating, and shoved it before me right in the mark left by the wake of the ship, as long as it lasted; and then took my chance, until I saw the hat of the lad. I strove with all my might to reach it — I struck out with all my strength — I had no thought for myself — I never looked once at the ship to see if assistance was coming from her — I only exerted myself to save the man from a watery grave! I was now close to it — I urged the grating on — stretched my hand out, holding on by the other, for I knew what drowning men would do; and, as I’m living here this minute, the hat alone remained in my hand — there was not a hair of a man’s head in it! I looked round me — I saw the boat coming towards me, but the object of my search was nowhere visible; I therefore clung to the grating; before the boat reached me I was almost sinking from loss of strength. When I was lifted in, I was so dead done, that I lay in the stern sheets panting like a dog in a hot day.

“The first words that I heard uttered were, ‘Mind how you come along in the boat.’ I recovered instantly and looked up. There was that lumbering vessel, appearing as if every time she rolled to leeward she would roll into us, and when she surged to windward, she left us far away from her. It was no time to act a part; the thing was to save one’s own life. I caught hold of a rope, and with the activity of a seaman, and a man used to these occurrences, I waited the time when the ship rolled to leeward, and I was on deck the first. Lucy was abaft, and I saw the welcome she expressed; but these were no moments for women and love. I jumped into the main-chains and assisted to get the crew on board; and as we were preparing to veer her astern — for she was the stern boat — a sea came heavier than the rest, the boat was swamped,

and the men with difficulty saved. The wreck of her cut adrift, we once more bore up and steered our course.

“ ‘ Much obliged to you, sir,’ said the captain ; ‘ but the next time I ’ll trouble you not to jump overboard after the men. I ’ve lost my boat and my grating, and all because you followed the hat, which was blown away to leeward from the head. We roared out and pointed to you, but you would go your own way. It was a gallant thing, however, for any man to do ; and between you and me,’ said he in a whisper, ‘ you are no more a Somersetshire man, than I ’m the figure-head of my own ship ! A ploughboy does not know how to round a ship to, and a youngster like you does not want a wig to cover his skull.’

“ ‘ This was awkward, and I escaped below : but I soon came on deck again, and every man fore and aft came and thanked me, and shook me by the hand. Then it was that I thought how curiously we were made up : that one moment we should be taking a man’s life for the sake of a few pieces of paper, and the next we should be risking our own to save a fellow-creature, with no hope of reward beyond what we get from a woman’s eye or our own hearts. But that is just it : a sailor never thinks of fear upon the sea — it’s his cradle, his home ; his house floats upon it, his provisions are within hail, his grog under his feet. He does not know what it is to feel hungry, and be shoved away like a dirty swab forward, when he asks a man as big as a beer-barrel round the provision-room, for enough bread to keep life and soul together. He is a stranger to what a man feels who is houseless, and pennyless ashore. ’

“ A glass of hot grog set me all a-taunto again. The crew crept silently below, and when they spoke to one another, it began with a shake of the head and a queer look of the eye ; and ‘ Poor Tom ! poor fellow ! ’ was all that was said of him who so lately had lived and moved amongst them.

“ We had run a thousand miles, and were not far to the southward of the Western Islands, when the wind gradually lulled, and, as if to take breath for another breeze,

got into a calm. Those who before had been unable to show on deck, now came up as merry as grigs; and we managed, when we were as quiet as a duck in a pond, to get a fiddler to work, and to do a bit of steps on the deck. Poor Tom was forgotten; his traps had been shared out amongst the crew, or sold at so low a price as scarcely to be worth keeping an account of. We were all alive and merry, when a circumstance occurred which by no means contributed to keep me free from alarm.

"We were, counting women, passengers, children, and crew, about seventy in all: every one easily known but myself. The captain seemed to think that I was under false colours; but he could not make out any more of me than beyond a doubt I was a sailor, and a good one. Still, in my long-shore toggery, and having shipped my gentlemanly manner, I was not easily to be fathomed. 'To-day,' said he, 'as we may whistle all the breath out of our bodies for a breeze, we'll have a general scrub below, open all the hatchways, and make ourselves as jolly as we can upon deck.' The women all liked it; the men thought it a good move, and all were pleased but the crew, who had most of the work to do. It's true, a few of the women lent a hand; but the scrubbing-brush and the sand were flourished about by the men belonging to the ship. We dined at one o'clock, and we were sitting on deck: the captain had a number of newspapers on board, some of which had got wet during the gale, and these were spread out to dry.

"I forgot, Ben, to tell you, that after we had been some days at sea, I paid the captain twenty pounds, to complete the sum for which he agreed to take me across. I did this that I might be free to land, and be off without interruption; for I had given him ten guineas before we started, and the rest was to be paid on our arrival. As I knew he was a man who never read a newspaper, and cared no more about what was going on in the world than a dog cares for its grandfather, I thought I was all safe in getting rid of some of the notes, and therefore, coming Captain Grand over him, I said, 'Here, my good fellow, as you may on your arrival be very busy with the other pas-

sengers and your cargo, and as I shall be myself much pressed for time (for it's not unlikely but that I shall return to England with you, if I can arrange the business on hand), I would rather pay you at once.' The bait took: the captain, thinking he would nab me for a return at a higher price, fingered the rhino, and looking at two five-pound flimsies, and holding them up to the light to see the watermark I suppose, put them away in his desk, and gave me a ticket which was to stand as an acknowledgment of the payment: saying, as he looked at me with a peculiar look of aversion, as if I had robbed him, and now paid him back in his own coin, 'Two bad paymasters, master; one who pays before, and the other who does not pay at all.' Indeed, I had observed that from the moment his crew spoke highly of me for venturing my life to save their shipmate, he had taken every opportunity to snarl and sneer at me.

" 'May I look at one of those newspapers, captain?' said old Richardson.

" 'Certainly!' replied the captain; and he placed two or three of the latest date in his hand.

" 'Lucy,' said the father, 'sit down here and read me something.'

" Well, Ben, I'm blessed if the girl did not get ahead with 'More particulars about the late desperate robbery and attempt at murder.' At last she came to the pith of the yarn — the rogues' yarn; giving an account, that the two men taken had made a full confession of their guilt, and had implicated a third person, who Lord — said, was the man who robbed him. — A reward had been offered for my discovery, and they had traced me even to the barber's shop. Thinks I, never mind, they'll lose the scent on the water: the mark of the keel, the wake of the ship, lasts about as long as a man's gratitude; and there is no footsteps to follow, no scent to lie, no track to direct. I smiled as I thought of this; for believing in my security, I despised the danger.

" 'Oh! here's more about it, Mr. Williams,' said Lucy; 'you look so interested in the story, that one might fancy you the young lord himself.'

“ ‘Or,’ said the captain, clapping in his oar, ‘one of the company, at any rate.’

“ ‘What horrible ruffians these fellows must be!’ said Lucy.

“ ‘Read the description of these vagabonds, my dear!’ said her father.

“ ‘Do you think, sir,’ said the captain, as he looked at me, ‘we have brought any of the vagabonds with us?’

“ We all smiled; but mine, Ben, was not a smile of merriment. I managed to alter my mouth into a smile, but it was one of bitter hatred against the captain.

“ ‘Oh!’ said Lucy, ‘here’s the description.

“ ‘The said Thomas Brown, alias William Smith, alias Robert Davis, is about twenty-two years of age, light hair and eyes, aquiline nose, and has a scar on his left cheek. On his right arm he has Britannia leaning on an anchor, done with gunpowder. He stands about five feet ten, is slim-made, with rather a gentlemanly manner. When last seen he wore a rough pea-jacket and large Flushing trousers, with a belcher handkerchief and very curious hat.’

“ ‘Well, that is odd!’ said the captain. ‘Mr. Williams has light eyes and a dark wig, is just the age, has just the nose, and as I’m a living man, has a mark upon his cheek!’

“ This only produced a laugh, more especially as I said, ‘But I don’t think I have the anchor on my arm.’

“ As he turned away he said out loud, ‘I’m not so certain of that; for when he came on board after that swim —’ and here he got over the other side of the deck and I heard no more. The man who would risk his life for another, covers himself from any unworthy suspicion. You know, Ben, what seamen think of such a person; how they point him out; how they cling to him; and how, if he is an officer, he can lead them with a thread. If he undertakes any service, there’s no lack of volunteers; if he orders, all rush to obey. At that moment they would as soon have believed me the devil himself as either Thomas Brown, William Smith, or Robert Davis. Villain

that I was, I had not yet learned the power of disguising my feelings so well as to escape the quick eye of the captain. I hated him — I feared him, and that made me hate him the more. Even had he not expressed himself so plainly, and brought the colour into my face as he pointed to the mark, I should have hated him, because I was jealous of him. He was no common captain of a trader, for his eyes were like that of a hawk, and they fell upon Lucy. She never was on deck that I was not with her, or he would have poisoned her heart against me ; but I repaid him in his own coin, for I spoke to Lucy of his unmanly behaviour to me, after I had jumped overboard, and soon convinced a willing ear, (for women always like the brave), that he who could hazard his life so coolly, could not bear about him a bad heart or an evil conscience. I saw, young as I was, that I had made my way good in that quarter, and I turned my attention to the father. He took kindly to me — for he was getting ahead in life, and he thought, I dare say, that a strong prop might support an old house ; and I had three great requisites — youth, strength, and some money. The captain had told them what I had said when I paid my passage-money, and that, like all men who are playing desperate and double-faced games, it was evident, one way or the other, I had not steered clear of the banks of falsehood.

“ But I must get ahead, Ben, or the watch will be out before you hear the end. The worst is to come ; and you are the only man who ever shall hear it from my lips. The wind, after baffling about for some time, enabled us to lay our course, and we once more heard the water rippling by us. She was but a sorry sailer in a wind ; and perhaps I thought worse of her than she really was, from my anxiety to be clear of her. It is true, I carried my description along with me ; and when my hair got all right again, unless it came the colour of my wig, any one could have known me at a glance ; but when I was safe in America, I should have been no worse than some of my neighbours.

“ Day passed slowly away ; the night, the long night, which I often broke in upon by walking the deck, and sometimes steering the ship, passed also ; and at the end

of the twenty-fourth day we began to see a bird or two, which had been blown from the land. We passed a good deal of floating weed, and a child might know we were getting towards the end of our passage. Several strange sail had been seen ; but all avoided us as carefully as we avoided them. We had not even an alarm, and I more than once thought that we were destined to arrive in safety. The night of the twenty-fifth was beautiful about eight in the evening ; and at ten, when we had taken our glass of grog, and had drunk 'a good sight of the land the next day,' although the captain swore it was two hundred miles off, we little thought how that night would end.

"We were on a wind on the starboard tack, with the top-gallant sails set, going four knots, with a smooth sea. It was a dark night, for there was no moon, and the clouds aloft were driving rather smartly in the same direction as the wind. I had a queer kind of overallishness that night. Lucy and I had kept an eye upon each other, and when I wished her good night, and saw her go down the companion, I little thought how soon I was to see her again, and under what frightful circumstances. I was lolling over the taffrail, when the captain came up to me, and he spoke out like a man.

" 'I say, Mr. Williams, Mr. Smith, Mr. Brown, or what the devil else you choose to call yourself — I say, I don't like the way you get talking to that girl on board my ship. Such as you don't want a modest woman for a companion !'

"I was fairly taken aback as any ship could be in a squall.

" 'It's no use your pumping up your lungs,' said the captain, 'for any humbug : seeing is believing all over the world ; and I have seen the mark on your arm, and you are the man for whom the reward has been offered. I'm much obliged to you,' said he, 'for taking me for such a fool as you think I am ; for the very notes you have given me are the notes stolen from that young lord. Every man ought to do his duty in this life,' continued the canting scoundrel, 'and I shall do mine. Out of my ship you

don't go ; and if there 's any truth in the papers, I 'll have the reward, and you shall dance upon nothing !'

" ' Is this to be the return,' said I, ' for risking my life for one of your crew ?'

" ' Ay,' said he with a sneer, ' and for losing my boat and my grating. But you are my man, and I 'll see you hanged.'

" ' Not you,' said I carelessly. ' But enough of this joking. I think you have taken a glass too much, and perhaps speak what you would not wish. I don't want to quarrel, or set a bad example to any man, so I 'll be off to my crib, and I recommend you to keep your eyes open and look out for the land.'

" ' I 'll look after *you*, my hearty,' said he ; and down I tumbled to my sleeping berth, none the better pleased for the conversation. He never had an opportunity of making money by hanging me, but I had an opportunity of shaking him off. About six bells in the first watch, a sudden squall took the ship, and the crew were saved the trouble of furling top-gallant-sails, for in a second they were split, and blew about like the ribbons in a woman's cap. Not a man fore or aft would go aloft, and we had plenty to do to get the courses off her, clew down the topsail yards, and make her a little snug. After the first burst, we had time to get a little to rights, and managed to hand the fore and the mizen-topsails, clapping the ' Hope ' right before the wind. As we were in no small danger, I had off coat again, gone aloft, lent a hand to furl the sails, and was now easily known as an old scaman. The wind increased — the rain began to pour — the night became so thick, misty, and murky, that you could not see the bowsprit-end ; whilst the ship seemed to sail faster than usual, and made as much noise as a three-decker, as she surged along. It was two bells in the middle watch before every thing was made secure ; the course was about west-north-west, for we had got into the latitude of Sandy Hook, and, not knowing much about longitude, we were running that down. The women, who at first had been frightened, were now all fast asleep again. As I was going below, the

captain said, 'I thought so ; a deserter in all probability, a smuggler, and certainly a thief !— fifty pounds easily got ! and I'll take him back at a cheaper rate ! What business has he now out of irons ?'

" 'That's gratitude !' said I. 'Good night, captain ; if you want a light hand aloft again, don't reckon upon me. I've saved your owners more than fifty pounds to-night, and you some hours' rest. I know what respect is due to the captain of a ship, or I should answer your other murmur in another style.'

" 'A mutiny !' said he, collaring me, and leading me to the mainmast. 'Here, Thompson, and you, Macintyre, seize this fellow's hands behind him, and lash him to the bits for a little. And here, boy,' said he, calling for his youngster, 'jump down in the cabin, and in the starboard locker abaft all, you'll find a pair of handcuffs. Now you are my prisoner, and shall remain so snug enough.'

"I need not tell you that I was a favourite with the crew, and that even they hesitated ; but the captain was a thick-set, sturdy fellow, and, stout as I was, I felt like a flea in his grip. One of the men, Thompson, I believe, talked about such usage to a gentleman passenger ; and then, and not till then, was it that the whole tide set against me. 'Gentleman, indeed !' said the captain. 'Do gentlemen mark their arms this way ?' and he tore my shirt and showed the cursed proof of what I was. 'Why this,' he continued, 'is the man for whom the reward was offered — he is the man who committed the murder !'

" 'Never !' said I, 'never ! I wanted to stop them after the robbery !'

" 'That's no business of ours ; and you did not save him, after all.'

" 'My eyes !' said Macintyre ; and in a moment I felt his hands holding me the faster.

" 'Bear a hand, boy !' said the captain.

" 'I can't find them, sir,' said he.

" 'Hold him fast, Thompson, whilst I jump below for them.'

" 'Ay, ay, sir,' said he.

“‘Is it thus you repay me for what I have done?’ said I. ‘Then my curse light upon you, you ungrateful villains!’ At that moment the captain came up with the handcuffs. I had but one chance — a struggle. ‘To the devil with you all!’ said I, and made a sudden jerk and got clear. It was three to one. I had no chance; my security was in an accident. That accident happened whilst the captain was urging on Thompson and the other, and whilst I, as far as in me lay, defended myself. The ship was lifted upon a high sea, and surged heavily forward. ‘Round her to!’ said a man forward, ‘we are in the rollers!’ Scarcely had his voice reached us, when again a long rolling sea, which came roaring behind us, broke just astern, and the surf flew over the stern. This shook the determination of the captain. He rounded the ship to, and as she came flying to the wind, the sails were taken aback, a heavy sea struck her on the chest-tree, and the foremast, giving a tremendous crash, fell over the star-board side.

“‘Who is the prisoner now?’ said I.

“No sooner had the ship become aback, than she lost her way through the water, became perfectly unmanageable, and as the succeeding roller came along, the main-topmast fell, the bowsprit snapped. — You may have seen some sights; but I had never seen thirty or forty affrighted women rush almost naked from their beds, gaining the slippery deck, to see ruin aloft, and inevitable shipwreck to leeward. To hear the scream of women in such moments! All chance of escape from any thing like order was instantly gone: the captain did not know what he was about; and I, who had seen some few dangerous surfs, and am not accustomed to be frightened before I am hurt — lost all presence of mind, and ran in amongst the women, who had got abaft the mizen-mast, all huddled together, and looking like a flock of sheep when a strange dog comes barking near them.

“I saw old Richardson in the arms of his daughter. The poor old fellow had been very ill, and had latterly fretted himself very much about his health, thinking he

had not enough left to start afresh in America. I told Lucy that I would die by her side, or save her and her father.

"I held Lucy round the waist with my right hand, and with the left I held on to a ring-bolt in the larboard bulwark, and kept as close under it as possible. Her father I had placed just before me, and he was clinging to a rope's end with both hands with a fearful grasp. 'Here's another coming sea,' said I, — 'hold fast — cling to me.' Like thunder it came on. Those who have heard how the sea topples along in its heavy rollers just as it begins to break — who have seen a stranded vessel smashed as if it were a light boat — alone can understand the tremendous power with which this rolling sea fell upon us. It broke about a hundred yards from the ship, dashed its entire strength against the 'Hope,' and carried away the upper works fore and aft. The ship shook terribly and her timbers started. She would have sunk from the immense quantity we shipped, had she not struck upon the sand as the wave passed almost over us, and nearly split fore and aft.

"Fearful was the cry which then arose — not from those on the deck — for only two remained, Lucy and myself — but from the lips of forty or fifty women, who, by that one sea, were swept clear from the decks, and left to struggle in the foaming sea. Short was the cry, but dreadful: Lucy's father had been carried away with the rest; and of that group of women who a few minutes before were on their knees, some holding up their children, — some clinging to sisters or to mothers — all, all praying, — not one soul remained.

"Never shall I forget that moment. Between the seas — and they don't take many seconds in following each other — the whole of that unfortunate robbery rushed before me. 'My poor father,' screamed Lucy! — and she clung to me faster as the sea came bellowing along again. I heard the voice of the captain, under the lee of the mainmast, calling out, 'Hold on — hold on!' The sea lifted the vessel afloat and left her again a wreck, with her starboard gunwale under water. I had answered the captain's 'Hold on;'

and he, directly the danger was past, left his place and came aft to us.

“‘What!’ said he,—for he was a man who could look death in the face—‘What! has the Devil forgot his own in such a night as this?’

“‘No,’ said I, ‘he’ll have you before long.’

“‘Another sea was coming; ‘Let me hold on by that ring-bolt,’ said the captain.

“‘Not you,’ said I.

“‘Then I will hold by your throat,’ said he; ‘you sha’n’t be saved whilst honest men drown.’

“I let go my hold of the ring-bolt to save myself from being in his grasp. The sea broke right into us, and when I recovered my breath I found myself in the water: near me was Lucy, and not far from her the captain. I cannot think of this last scene without trembling. I caught Lucy by the hair, and at the same time seized hold of a studding-sail boom, which, amidst the general wreck, had been washed overboard. The ‘Hope’ was devoured by that last sea; and the waves were covered with the pieces of the wreck. I pulled Lucy to the spar, and bade her cling to it; it hardly would support her weight, and I was obliged to hold it for fear it should be swept away from me. You know how little a swimmer requires to keep him above water; but here the surf raged over and over me fearfully, and I felt that I required a little more assistance.

“At this moment, the captain, who could swim, made towards us. The spar, I told you, was not more than sufficient for Lucy. I saw her certain death if the captain caught hold of it; and therefore I resolved to drown him! As he approached, I lifted myself a little by the aid of the spar. The captain was nearly done; he grasped at the boom, and as he missed it I placed my foot on his head and shoved him under water. He rose again, and again I succeeded. I saw his imploring look to me to save him—I of all men alive to save him!—and with my own life in danger! He must have known very little of men of my character. I drowned him—and now the secret is out.

“I awoke from a kind of stupor to find myself in a

fisherman's hut. How I had been saved, God only knows: but I of all that crew — I, the only one who would have wished to die, was saved. Days before I had strength to go out, body after body had been washed on shore and buried. No description of mine could identify Lucy. No doubt she was buried with the rest on the beach, near the spot where her body was washed ashore.

"I have never slept, from that moment; but no human being, except yourself, has ever yet heard of the loss of the 'Hope.' I entered on board an American merchant-ship, having procured a certificate that I was a native of that country. I made two voyages; the third we were boarded by an English man-of-war. We were mustered, my protection torn before my face, and after one or two changes, I was drafted on board the Victory. Now, Ben, I have a favour to ask of you. — My daughter —"

"Forecastle there!" said the officer of the watch.

"Sir," answered the lieutenant, who was on the weather side.

"Keep a good look-out for any rockets or blue lights."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"The admiral's on deck," said Matson.

"It's a pity," said I, "he has not two eyes; he would sleep with one always open."

CHAPTER XII.

We always are ready;
Steady, boys, steady.

Sea Song

DURING the day, while we were about sixty miles to the westward of Cadiz, we always preserved our line of battle in order of sailing. The fleet was kept in two lines, with an advance squadron of eight of the fastest sailers. Col-

Collingwood led his line, and Nelson his ; and never before did two English admirals seem to understand each other better than these two gallant men. It was not the first time they had met on service ; and, in the earlier part of their lives, Collingwood succeeded Nelson in many of the ships out of which the latter was promoted or exchanged. There was no paltry jealousy between them ; they were above all that. Collingwood might have envied the chances which fell to Nelson, but he never would have attributed the success of the great admiral to chance alone : if the same chance had fallen to Collingwood, he would have fought the battle of the Nile just as well as Nelson. The enemies of our country did not know Collingwood ; but the English service knew and respected him.

It is probable that the enemy would have put to sea before the 19th October, had they not heard that Nelson had joined the fleet ; for they knew well enough that Admiral Louis had been sent to Gibraltar, for provisions and water, with six sail of the line ; and Villeneuve, who commanded the combined fleets, was not a man to let a chance escape him. The arrival of Nelson, and the reinforcement we brought with us, put a stopper upon the Frenchman's calculation ; and he and old Gravina used to smoke a cigar or two, and look at each other like two strange cats in a garret. Villeneuve did not like the hero of the Nile—the conqueror of Copenhagen, for an antagonist, and therefore he remained in harbour until his master turned him out.

It was on the 19th October that the Mars, the nearest ship to the fleet which formed the line of communication with the in-shore squadron, made the signal that the enemy were coming out of harbour. The wind was south-south-west, and the admiral had his cocked-hat on. I remember this ; for when the signal was reported to him, he jumped on the poop in such a hurry that he left his scraper behind him. " Let them come ! " said he ; " I won't force them back. Only let me get between them and their harbour, and we will try our strength on the high seas. Keep a strict look-out upon the Mars," said he : " Brace, keep your eye fixed upon her. You may have some more

swords under your arm between this and the day after to-morrow."

The wind had varied a little more towards the west, and we now steered south-east, in order to let the enemy out of harbour comfortably, and give them time to eat their dinner ; and, I know, I had very little time for mine, for every two minutes I heard the admiral's voice to the signal-lieutenant, "Has Brace got his eye upon the Mars?" and then I felt a kind of warm feeling, as if I was somebody, with my glass to my eye. At two o'clock I called out, "Signal going up on board the Mars!" One of the flags had broken its top, and I saw it before it cleared the top-sail-yard. Every eye was turned to her, but I made out the numbers first ; and there it was as large as the flags could make it — "The enemy have put to sea." Every man fore and aft knew it as soon as the admiral, for the signal-lieutenant, who had got the book, could not report such a signal in the usual cold manner, but he called out from the break of the poop, as he bundled over the leaves, — "'The enemy have put to sea, mv lord!"

As a pretty deal of curiosity had been excited from the first signal, and as the men got nearer the gangways than they usually did, the signal was heard by those on the lookout, and the ship shook with the tramp of the men as they scudded on deck to look at the Mars.

"Steer south-east," said the admiral, "and make more sail!" That was soon done. We did not want the hands turned up. I believe, if Nelson had called out to turn the ship inside out, it would have been done in the turn of a handspike.

The day closed ; the signal had been repeated ; and the men, fore and aft, began to get together, in small numbers, talking over the chances. Many of them had been at Copenhagen ; some in the Nile, and with St. Vincent ; and all had been more or less pretty warmly engaged at one time or another. Powder and shot were nothing new to them ; and it would have been quite sufficient to convince Villeneuve, had he only listened to the yarns that were spun that night, and the confidence of every man and boy on board the Victory, that the combined fleet would sail into

Portsmouth without troubling either the French or the Spaniards to navigate or to work them.

I have often thought of the feeling of the men on that night. We knew that the largest fleet we ever yet tackled was out of its stow-hole ; we knew who commanded us ; and we did not want any ghost to come over the water to tell us that, if they had been twice as many, we should not have turned our sterns towards them.

My day's work being finished, I had to turn in till daylight. In passing round the forecastle I stopped to observe some of the men, whose hopes and spirits were all of the right sort. Five or six of them had got the grindstone, and were sharpening cutlasses ; others putting on a new becket ; whilst some got their boarding pikes and sharpened the points. One or two were working away to their own music, as they hummed out an old stave just loud enough for the rest to hear the words ; one was sitting down polishing his pistol and rubbing up the lock ; and when they spoke, it was all about the coming fight. The moon was out, the night was fine, the wind was light, and, now and then, when the grindstone allowed me to hear (for that is a sharp unpleasant sound), I caught the following discourse : —

" I 've been thinking," said one man, who was a square-built fellow, and who was turning the stone for another to sharpen a cutlass upon, — " I 've been thinking, messmates, what 's the reason Frenchmen never wear tails."

" Why," said another, " don't you know, Bob ? — it 's because we should have something to hold on by when they retreat. — But," he continued, feeling the edge of the cutlass, " this would shave a mouse asleep, and I don't want a tail to steady the head of the chap this reaches."

" We shall be at it to-morrow," said another, " and before dark many 's the one who 'll lose the number of his mess."

" Never mind, Bill ; they won't go without companions ; and it 's much better to have two languages than one."

" There 'll be three of them, — we sha'n't have much

trouble with the Spaniards," replied another. "Well, this business will settle the war, and then hurrah for Portsmouth! My eyes! how the girls will stare if we bring in that large fleet!"

How the admiral jumped about when they reported the signal to him to-day! I thought the stump of his right arm would have been shaken out of its hold. He is the one! By the piper! if we get into action, we sha'n't come out of it again in a hurry. But I don't feel as if I was going to be shot this time.

When I got snug into my hammock, I began thinking and thinking, until I thought that I was going to die, — and then, what was to become of Tackle's daughter? "Ay," said I to myself, as I rubbed my eyes, in order to make sure that I was awake, "she may soon be without a protector or a friend, for, now I come to think of it, the admiral perhaps has had a warning, for, just before he hoisted his flag, he went to see his coffin (that one Hallowell gave him), and said he, "I shall want that when I come back." I got wool-gathering and thinking all about death and such like, for the ship appeared to me to be more still than usual — the decks more quiet, and perhaps the feeling generally found amongst a crew going into action, was experienced by the bravest on board the Victory. We must all have our misgivings and our curious feelings before the first broadside. I don't care how great a scamp a man may be, or how often he has walked up to the muzzle of an eighteen-pounder, but he must feel, that in a moment he may be cut to pieces, his wife left a beggar, his children without a soul to relieve them. Well, I'm not ashamed to say that I felt queerish — not on account of myself. I had been wild enough, to be sure, when I was young; but I never injured man or woman. If ever I saw a poor fellow with his grog stopped, I gave him a sip of mine. I never reported any man so as to get him punished; and although I had been in the service some few years, yet I never had a stripe in my life. So I was easy as to my own score. But I thought of Susan, and what would become of her if I died. If Nelson lived, I knew he would take care

of her ; but in such an action as this was sure to be, who could count upon coming out of it clear of the surgeon or the sail-maker ? Well, I got dozing and dozing, and then I saw the sail-maker taking my measure with my hammock ; and I awoke from a troubled dream, fancying he had run the needle through my nose.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

Fall'n ! fall'n ! is the hero, but Victory's cry
 Saluted his soul as it took its sad flight,
 And thousands like Nelson would sure wish to die,
 Adored by his country, triumphant in fight ! — *Sea Song.*

I WAS on deck before daylight ; so was the admiral. Those who had had the middle watch hardly cared to turn in ; and when we could see the horizon, and make out the fleet and the frigates, we saw from the mast-head of the *Euryalus* that the enemy were in sight, bearing north. Away we went in that direction, carrying a press of sail, and all the fleet cracking on not to drop astern. Nelson was on deck from daylight until dark, taking short turns on the quarter-deck, and moving about his right arm, or its stump, like a village pump-handle. The breeze now freshened from the south-west ; and as we had the Frenchmen clear of their port, and found that we gained upon them, there was no doubt as to the battle.

The 20th of October was not passed in play-acting : the ship was got ready for action ; and as we had plenty of time before us, the arms were inspected, the fire-screen examined, and more powder filled. Towards the evening, the *Euryalus* again made the signal, "that the enemy seemed bound to the westward ;" and I began to think that if they sailed well, we might yet see Jamaica before we got them into Portsmouth. They were not sparing of their canvass ; but we overhauled them fast, and when night came on we were close enough to keep good sight of them by means of the frigates : and there was no fear, unless a fog or a gale came on, that they could slip away from us. Of course, we kept a bright look-out that night ; and I would not have been the midshipman of the watch who lost sight of the *Euryalus* for two minutes.

At daylight on the 21st of October, there they were,

well within sight of us. I thought I never should have done counting them ; for half the midshipmen of the ship came upon the poop, and, "Brace," says one, "I'll give you a glass of grog to let me have a squint." Well, there was no standing that ; not that I cared about the grog, but it looked so much like a young Nelson. "Brace," said another, "just let me look at that large one, for we shall be alongside of her to a certainty." "Only for half a second," said a third. "I won't be an instant," said a fourth. I never should have done my duty, had not the admiral called out, "How many of them are there in all?" and then it was high time I looked for myself. Well, I set to work, and called out, "There are thirty-three ships of the line, my lord, and seven large frigates;" and the the signal-lieutenant made the same report.

"Forty in all," said his lordship.

"Yes, my lord," said I. Nelson came upon the poop, took the glass from my hand, and began to count them himself. I stood a little way off with my hat in my hand, and I then took a good look at him. His face and features were nothing new to me, — I had unrigged him hundreds of times, and yet I thought I saw something which I never remarked before : he looked more thoughtful. He went on after he had counted thirty out loud, — "Thirty-one," said he ; "ah ! that's a frigate — quite right ! — thirty-three," and so on until he came to the fortieth. "They show well, Hardy," said he, calling the captain ; "they offer battle nobly. They looked mixed though," he continued, looking through the glass and speaking without receiving an answer : "the Frenchman and the Spaniard are placed alternately. That large one, my old friend, I know you again — Spanish beyond a doubt ; but the next one is French, from the rake of the masts and the height of the topmasts." He then took his eye from the glass, and held it for me to take. For about a minute he appeared very thoughtful ; he then turned round and said in a quick tone of voice, "Signal-officer !"

"My lord," was answered before the last word was half out : — we were all ready for any thing, and every man was at his station.

"Make the signal to 'bear down upon the enemy in two lines.'"

The signal was flying in a moment. The wind at this time had become light and variable, and ultimately shifted round towards the westward. The enemy were on the starboard tack, standing to the southward in a close line of battle; they were under easy sail, and certainly never attempted to avoid the action.

Collingwood led the lee-line in the Royal Sovereign; he had thirteen ships; the Mars, Belleisle, Tonnant, Bellephophon, Colossus, Achille, Polyphemus, Revenge, Swiftsure, Defence, Thunderer, Defiance. In the weather-line we had the Victory, Temeraire, Neptune, Conqueror, Leviathan, Ajax, Orion, the old Agamemnon, the Minotaur, Spartiate, Britannia, Africa, Prince, and Dreadnought. Then came a tail of frigates, — the Euryalus, Sirius, Phoebe, Naiad; and after them two of the small fry, the Pickle schooner, and the Entreprenant cutter.

As we bore up, the enemy tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack. When Nelson saw this, and that there was no intention on the part of the Frenchman and the Spaniard to top their booms and be off, he ordered the signal, "Prepare to anchor," to be hoisted. Both our lines were under all sail; but the wind being very light, we did not make much way through the water. After Nelson had taken another overhaul at the enemy, who had now formed into a half-moon, he went below to his cabin, where he remained some time. Then it was that he wrote his last wishes about *her*.

We were now standing down with all sail set towards the enemy's line. Before we began, we had our dinner; although in several of the ships some of the men went without their allowance that day. I was on the poop watching the fleets; and I think I see the scene before me now, as I endeavour to describe it.

It was about this time that we hoisted the signal, "England expects every man will do his duty." The man who said that he found it impossible to make two men's minds go alike, should have been then in our fleet, and he would have witnessed a contradiction. As if by magic,

every ship in the fleet received the signal with three tremendous cheers. It was a cheer which came home to the hearts of us all, and must have convinced our admiral that he would be supported, heart and hand, and that it was the forerunner of a certain victory. I think I hear the cheers now, as they rolled over the water, receiving an echo from every ship, increasing as the roll increased; and hang me if I don't think the Spaniards heard it at Cadiz, and mistook it for thunder. From that instant we rubbed off all kind of thought, and we looked forward to the moment when we should give that big ship a salute which she would remember.

We had a little fun before the fight. Westenburg, a German assistant-surgeon, came from the cockpit equipped for slaughter: he had his shirt-sleeves turned up, was without his coat and waistcoat, had covered his pantaloons with an apron, and looked for all the world like a butcher. The youngsters on the lower deck, when they saw this preparation to bleed them, pelted the doctor with wads until he was glad to make a hasty retreat to his place of security.

I was on the poop, amongst the bunting and Captain Adair's marines. There they were, two deep as they call it, taking it as coolly as most people would when they piped to dinner.

Nelson, after having finished his last yarn upon paper, walked round the decks to see that all was right and ready: he spoke to many of the men, and he encouraged all. It gives fresh confidence to a seaman when he sees his admiral looking after every thing himself. He was evidently pleased with the looks of his men. When he came on the quarter-deck he was received with three good cheers: this he acknowledged by bowing his head to his crew, who were proud enough of their commander. We all knew him well enough; and it was no easy matter to persuade him to let the *Temeraire* pass the *Victory*, in order to take off a little of the attention with which the Frenchmen were sure to honour us. He made the signal for "the *Temeraire* to pass ahead:" but he took good care to carry on every stitch he could cram upon the *Victory*;

so that it was no easy matter to obey the order, the sailing of both ships being nearly equal. The *Temeraire* ranged up on our quarter and took the wind out of our sails, and then got abeam and would have passed us. Nelson observing this, and being unable to bear the idea that any one should be exposed to guard him, forgot for a moment his previous signal, and called out, speaking, as he always did, a little through his nose, "Captain Hervey, I request you to keep in your proper station, which is *astern* of the *Victory*!"

The first shot was now fired; it was at noon precisely, for the master took the sun just as if we were going a long run, and that navigation was in the wind's eye. The *Monarca* and the *Fougueux* opened at the same moment upon the *Royal Sovereign*, as she was steering down right in amongst the enemy as steadily as if she was going into Portsmouth harbour. The firing attracted the attention of the admiral, who called out, loud enough for us all to hear him, "See how that gallant fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action!" She never yawed a bit, and for ten minutes she never took the least notice of the enemy; then, by way of making a little smoke, she fired one or two shots, continuing her steady course until twenty minutes after twelve, when she broke through the line of the enemy's fleet, passing *astern* of the *Santa Anna*, a Spanish three-decker, and giving her such a salute in her stern-frame, that the admiral would have caught cold if he slept in the after-cabin and the ship was before the wind. He then luffed up close alongside, and engaged her to leeward. He was not left unsupported; for the *Mars*, *Belleisle*, and *Tonnant* were close in the *Sovereign's* wake; and they soon relieved their gallant admiral from the heavy fire into which he had steered. Never was there a more gallant action — a more noble sight. The guns roared, and so fast and heavy was the firing, that it sounded like one continued roll.

We all kept our eyes fixed upon the lee-line, until we found out that we were within range, and the enemy had begun measuring distances with us. They fired single shots from two of the nearest ships, until they saw that

their shots came well over us ; they then opened their broadsides and blazed away as fast as they could. They fired high, as if wishing to riddle us aloft, and thus keep us the longer from coming into close action. They knew we were Nelson's ship ; not because we steered gallantly in amongst them, for Collingwood did the same ; but because they saw that we made all the signals, and that we had half-a-dozen flags aloft. It was as plain as a pike-staff that we were the admiral's ship ; and any man who knew a cocked-hat from a ring-bolt would have known the Victory.

Nelson remained below writing until the first shot struck the Victory. When he came on deck, he observed that the jack-yard of the lower studding-sail was tripped up to clear the tack, for the order was given that no sail was to be taken in for fear of lumbering the decks ; but the studding-sail halyards and tacks were to be cut away, and the sails let overboard. " Hulloa !" said Nelson, " what's all this ? Haul that tack out directly, or those d—d Frenchmen will think we are shortening sail because they've hit us ! "

We could not make out which was the admiral's ship of the enemy, for they wore no colours or flags ; but we knew which was the largest ship, and that was quite enough for Nelson. But it struck us all as odd, that we were going into action with a large fleet without being able to make out the flag of the commander-in-chief. That was not like Nelson, who kept as many flags aloft as a ship dressed in colours. We were quite certain they were not English ; and as the whole world were upon our shoulders then, we could not go far wrong in firing into them. It was said that the French were not quite sure the Spaniards would stand the hammering they were sure of getting ; and the Spanish admiral, who, like all Spaniards, was proud and brave, did not think that the friendly assistance of the French was worth much. This accounts, as far as any one can understand the order of their line of battle, for both nations being huddled together. Villeneuve was afraid that the Spanish ships, although they had lions for their figure-heads, would have been selected by Nelson ;

and Gravina thought the long topmast of the Frenchman might have the topsail-yard close up to the mast-head, and a few studding-sails dangling to them, directly the firing began.

Now the difference was this: they were both afraid of us, and we did not care one straw for both of them. They must have felt very queer, when Collingwood, as he steered into action, received the fire of the fleet with so much coolness. Owing to the half-moon form of it, when the Victory got within good range, every ship which could get a gun to bear blazed away at us; but we looked at them, and some of the fellows forward ran out on the bowsprit-end, and hitting the end of their elbows, as we do when we crack biscuit, told them (as if they could hear them), "There, fire at that, and be d—d to you!"

Nelson was standing on the break of the poop with Blackwood and Prowse;—one commanded the Euryalus, and the other the Sirius;—I was within hail of them, and heard all that passed. Finding the shots coming over us thick and fast, Nelson desired them to go on board their own ships. On leaving the Victory, Blackwood said, "I hope, my lord, soon to return and see you master of twenty prizes." To which Nelson answered, "God bless you, Blackwood, *I shall never see you again!*"

Now if any one from aloft had whispered to my noble commander, as Matson said he felt, that in four hours from that time he would be stretched on the deck in the midshipman's berth, a dying man; not likely even to live to hear how many of the enemy were taken, much less to receive the greatest blessing a seaman can receive, which is to *see the prize* within hail; not likely to hear the cheers which follow a victory; not able to receive the swords of the captains; and last of all, not to see the flag of Old England blowing out over the tri-coloured rag of republicanism and revolution,—why, I say, that under all those circumstances, the man who could stand as coolly as Nelson did, when his ship was every second taking him nearer to his deathbed, would have been the greatest man that ever lived.

Poor Whipple, the captain's clerk, was sent down to

see if the tiller-ropes were shot away: Westphall*, of whom he asked the question, replied, "No; I see them working." At that moment Whipple gave a kind of "whew!" and fell dead. He had not a scratch or mark about him, and the wind must have been too much for his breath. He is the only instance I ever knew of a man being killed by the wind of a shot.

The breeze was light, and a three-decker does not fly in such weather. We had plenty of time to overhaul our log-books: and that was about the most uncomfortable hour many of us ever knew; for now and then a shipmate or a messmate was knocked off, yet not a shot did we return, and little was doing to draw off our attention. At last we got death on the quarter-deck. Whilst Mr. Scott, the secretary, was speaking to Hardy,—whilst they were talking just as quietly as two shore-going fellows in the street,—a round-shot came whizzing along and cut the secretary in half. Captain Adair and myself jumped from the poop and tried to get him out of the way before the admiral could see him. His eye, however, was every where; he saw it, and, like many a man, asked a question, although he knew what must be the answer.

"Is that poor Scott that's gone?" said he.

"Yes, my lord," I answered, for it was of no use denying it, and that was not the moment to be saying any thing but the truth.

"Poor fellow!" he exclaimed.

That business was soon done. I had got back to the poop to my proper station, and began to look about me to see what was going on, when smack came a double-headed shot in amongst the marines, who were drawn up in a line, standing at ease; and I'm blessed if eight of them ever obeyed the next order of "attention!"—they were as dead as salt herrings. Not two minutes after we had thrown them overboard, comes another shot—smack it struck against the fore-brace bits on the quarter-deck, sending the splinters right and left. A piece tore off Hardy's buckle; and Nelson looked at him, as much as to say, "What, ar'n't you killed?" quietly remarking, "This is too warm work to last long!" and walked on as coolly as ever.

* Now Sir George Westphall.

We had now got down pretty close to the enemy, and began to think of returning them some of the hard-headed messengers they had sent us so plentifully. Our main topmast and all the studding-sail booms had been shot away: we were like a winged bird, with our feathers hanging about us, and falling off one by one. We had lost nearly fifty men, but had not fired a shot. Our turn, however, had now come; and the men fore and aft the deck, who had hitherto kept a strict silence, began to talk to one another. The side tackles of the guns were looked to, and the matches were blown,—for at that time, although we had them, we seldom used our locks, to make fighting easy and death more sure.

We were steering for the largest ship of the enemy's line, the *Santissima Trinidad*. We knew her on account of her four tier of ports; for she was the only ship ever built that carried such a number of guns, and looked as if three ships had been knocked into one. The ships ahead and astern of her were so close, that we could not have broken the line without running one or the other on board; and this proves that Villeneuve had well calculated his advantage. If there had been a good breeze of wind, I don't think he would have offered battle: but he knew how long it would take for us to get into action—close action, such as Nelson liked; and under what great disadvantages we laboured, in being exposed for a quarter of an hour to such a hot raking fire as half-a-dozen line-of-battle ships could pour into us before we could open our broadsides upon them. We were now close on board of them.

To have continued our course, and endeavoured to pass astern of the big ship, as we called her, we must have got entangled in the enemy's line. Nelson seeing this, raked the *Santissima Trinidad* in passing,—a good example, which the *Temeraire* followed: and then came the *Nep-tune*, who did the same and finished her: the crash of the three broadsides was tremendous! Nelson then told Hardy to take his choice of an opponent, who ordered the helm to be put hard a-port, and the *Victory* fell alongside of the *Redoutable*. She was all ready to give us a warm reception; for, as we came close, she poured into us a broad-

side of grape, canister, round-shot, and langridge ; and if they could have rammed into their guns any tomahawks and boarding-pikes, I think they would have made us a present of them all ! It put me in mind of the Javanese when they smoke opium : they pay so much for as long a puff as they can take without a bubble bursting ; directly that takes place, down goes the pipe, and off walks the smoker, comfortably drunk. So it was with this ship : she fired one heavy broadside, and that broke many a bubble, she knew she was not to try that trick again, so she let down her lower-deck ports, and never fired another gun from that deck during the action.

On the larboard side of us we had the Santissima Trinidad and the Bucentaure. Pat O'Riley, who was captain of one of the quarter-deck guns, roared out, "Och me ! and I'm a Catholic too ! does any man think I'll fire into the Holy Trinity ?—not I. But small blame to the others if they don't catch O'Riley's blessing !" and he blazed away at the Bucentaure. Away went our mizen-mast about eight or ten feet above the poop-deck : it was "Stand from under, signal-man," and I gave a jump clear of the wreck, and was all clear and above board. In the mean time the Temeraire had fixed herself upon the broadside of the Redoubtable ; a Spaniard fell on board of the Temeraire ; and the four ships were all in a line, as if we were going to try the battle of St. Vincent's over again. Well, there's only one way of describing an action where the ships are placed broadside to broadside, and when it is give and take, just as hard as both parties can give and take. One immense cloud of smoke almost suffocated us, and for some time it was impossible to make out what the other ships were about. The noise of the guns, the "Blaze away, boys !" the singing out for powder, and the snarl for the match, only came between the shots, which flew about like hail-stones in a gale of wind.

We soon found out that the great guns were the smallest part of the annoyance ; for every now and then whiz came a small whistle of a musket-shot, and down went a man to a certainty. This amusement to our enemies and death to us, we soon found, came from the different tops of the

French and Spanish ships. As this part of the play was not what we exactly bargained for, our marines, who were getting thinned from this hidden fire, thought they might as well return the compliment, and they prepared to make themselves topmen for the occasion. Captain Adair, as gallant an officer as the marines ever had amongst them (and that's saying a great deal for any man, for in that force are to be found as many brave and excellent soldiers as in any regiment or army in the whole world. Indeed, wherever a danger was to be faced, there you saw a marine; and whenever any cutting-out took place, you would find one or two volunteers from that noble corps, either sitting in the stern-sheets or peeping over the bows of the boats);—Adair was to lead them aloft. It is not every man who wears a blue jacket and loose trowsers who can carry a musket into the main-top on a calm day, even without three enemy's ships alongside of you.

"Follow me!" said Adair, "and I'll make sailors of you!" Up he jumped upon the ratlines, and before he had got a fathom aloft, he fell down dead upon the deck, having received eighteen musket-balls in him. That shows how well the Frenchmen fired;—eighteen shots in a moment, and all to hit; that shows how sharp the business was!—Since the days when the first admiral, whom they call Noah, sailed about the world, there never was such a roar of cannon on the high seas. No man can relate that action without feeling pity for those who fell: it was a dreadful slaughter. The Bucentaure lost three hundred and sixty men *killed* before she struck, and not a ship escaped without a considerable thinning of the different messes.

As yet, all prospered; every thing was going on well and leading to a certain victory. Nelson was walking the deck; and in spite of the quick eyes of the Frenchmen aloft who had shot Adair, they had not distinguished him. He wore that day his every-day dress.*

* Some people have since said that he desired his stars to be placed on his coat; but they are wrong. On all his coats he had four orders *embroidered*, and Nelson was not a likely man to order them to be *picked out because he was going into action*.

The Redoutable having ceased firing her great guns, was considered to have struck: she had no flag up, nor had she ever hoisted one. I wish I had been alongside of the signal-man—I think he would have shown it for a moment. Nelson desired that the firing should be directed upon the Bucentaure, and from that moment the firing from the tops of the Redoutable increased. I thought I had got into a parcel of birds' nests, the balls came whistling about me so fast; and then I thought the Frenchmen had mistaken me for Lord Nelson.

I was standing on the starboard side of the poop close to the ladder, watching the admiral, for I could not keep my eyes off him, when I saw him fall. I never felt the splinter which a moment afterwards grazed my leg; I never touched one of the steps of the ladder, for I made but one leap, and I was the first man alongside of him; Hardy was the next.

"I hope it is not mortal," he said.

Nelson had fallen on his face, and I knelt down to lift him up; when he said, "They have done for me at last, Hardy."

"I hope not, my lord," he replied. His heart was too full to say more.

"Yes," replied Nelson; "they have shot my backbone through."

Mr. Burke, the purser, and myself, carried him below. I saw the admiral cover his face with his handkerchief, in order that the crew might not know him. That was of no use; it was along the decks in a minute. Who could keep that a secret which every one desired should not happen? But the sight which followed was one that few have ever seen! We took him below; here we found the wounded and the dying—one groaning in agony, the next showing a silent disdain of all pain. Here was one who, feeling the torment of the tourniquet, had loosened it, and was gradually sinking; there the hasty of temper cursing his fate, and wishing to be revenged. Over our heads, the guns thundered; the ship trembled with the continued firing; whilst the loud cheers of the crew, as the enemy showed an ensign only to strike it immediately,

lighted up the countenance of the admiral, who would brighten with hope, although nearly crushed by pain.

We carried Nelson over heaps of the wounded. A dead silence took place when we got to the cockpit, and every eye was turned towards us to see whom we were bringing. We placed him on a purser's mattress spread on the deck; he was immediately stripped, and looked like a skeleton with a skin over it. I always wondered how so weak a frame could enclose so great a heart.—By the side of Nelson was placed young Westphall: he was wounded on the head. I rolled up Nelson's coat and placed it under the youngster: the blood flowed freely, and becoming coagulated, the bullion of the epaulette adhered to the mass. When Westphall was removed, after Nelson's death, we were obliged to cut the bullion off; and this, as every relic of Nelson, was deservedly prized. It was claimed by Pascoe, who had it set as a brooch, encircled by the words, "England expects every man will do his duty."—Long may Pascoe live to wear it! He was wounded, but he never complained—he bore his pain without a groan; but when he heard Nelson was killed, he burst into tears and cried like a child.*

Beattie came. "It is useless," said Nelson in a faint tone of voice—"It is useless, Beattie; you can do nothing for me: I feel it in my back; I feel a gush of blood every moment in my breast. Go, Beattie, go to those to whom you *may* be useful!"

The doctor stood watching his countenance; and when the chaplain touched Beattie's arm, and looked at him in the face, as much as to say, "Doctor, what is your opinion?" I overheard the answer, which was only meant for the ears of the captain and the chaplain, "No hope whatever!"

I ran upon deck. I was burning for some revenge; and if I could have boarded the top of that cursed ship, d—n me if I would not almost have eaten the Frenchman! I was on the poop in an instant; I seized a musket,

* The eye-witness of the scene would do an injustice if he failed to mention this, and the work of the historian is ennobled by the record of this officer's name.

and I watched the mizen-top of the Redoubtable, from which the fatal shot had been fired. There were still two Frenchmen left aloft—the rest had been killed—and one of those had killed the admiral. Mr. Pollard and Mr. Collingwood, two gallant young midshipmen, were the only two left alive on the poop of the Victory when I joined them. I supplied them with cartridges, and loaded my own gun. I saw the man, for we knew him by his glazed hat and white frock jacket. “Be ready,” said Pollard: “he will come within sight directly; he has loaded his musket.”—“That’s he! that’s he!” we all said at the same moment, and we fired instantly. *His* gun was discharged at the same time,—he fell dead, and I lost my arm! I was desired to go below; and I did not stand two calls,—my worst enemy was dead, my best friend was dying. Smarting from the wound, I was going down the poop-ladder, when a small splinter struck my eye, and caused the most insufferable pain for a short time. Bleeding and almost fainting, I went below. A tourniquet was instantly applied, and some water given me. I was in the act of drinking it, when one of the men said,—“Brace, the admiral is near his end.” I staggered to the midshipmen’s berth.

Although the space was kept as clear as possible in order to give Nelson all the air which could reach him, room was made for me. Every one knew that I had stood by him from the first hour he became a sailor until this last sad moment: besides which, he had inquired for me.

“Who is that?” said the admiral, as he heard the noise in making room for me.

“Brace, my lord,” I replied.

“Not wounded, I hope?”

“I have lost an eye and an arm, my lord,” said I, “and shall better resemble for the future my glorious commander!”

“Come nearer,” said he; his voice was getting very weak and indistinct. Hardy—(the captain inclined his head), “this is my oldest follower, wounded—unfit any longer to serve his Majesty; to you I leave it to place

him in Greenwich." Whilst he was saying this, I had taken his hand; and as I kissed it, he felt the tears which dropped upon it.

"Listen to me," he continued. "When you get to England and are discharged, go to Merton; tell her of my last moments—tell her I have left a memorial in her behalf;—tell her, that even now, when all is shortly to pass away, I thought of her; that my last prayer was for her: tell her——" At this moment a loud cheer from the crew of the *Victory* startled him. We had passed the *Royal Sovereign*, and we gave them that cheer which every one felt was a signal of victory, and that no great loss had overtaken us. The *Royal Sovereign* returned it, Collingwood's hat waving above the rest.

"What is that, Hardy?" he said; but Hardy was on deck. About a minute afterwards he returned, when Nelson repeated the question.

"It was the men cheering for the tenth ship of the enemy's line which has struck, and as they passed the *Royal Sovereign*."

"None of ours have struck, I hope, Hardy?"

"There's no fear of that, my lord," replied the captain.

"Then I am more easy," the admiral continued.

"Hardy, I am a dead man: I am going fast—it will be all over with me soon."

At the time this overwhelming event happened, the battle had been nobly fought along the whole line. After Collingwood had raked the *Santa Anna* and ranged up alongside of her, he was nobly seconded by the *Mars*, commanded by Worthy Duff, as he was called—and he merited the name. After fighting like a good officer, he, poor fellow! was nearly cut in half by a round shot, and England thus lost another hero. The *Sovereign* after her first flourish with the *Santa Anna*, fell foul of every ship, Spanish or French, within reach of her guns; whilst the *Bellerophon*, after breaking the line, got aboard of the *Aigle*, an eighty-gun ship. The fore-yard of the *Bellerophon* caught the main-yard of the Frenchman, and a heavy fire was immediately directed upon her from the starboard bow; the larboard bow guns were blazing away into the *Monarca*.

At the same time she was receiving and returning, without much time being lost, the fire of the Bahama, a Spanish eighty-gun ship, which had drifted on the Bellerophon's larboard quarter ; whilst a ship, as large as her name was long, the St. Juan Nepomuceno, got athwart her stern ; and a French eighty-gun ship, the Swiftsure, touched her up on the starboard quarter.

The Bellerophon's men never thought of the odds against them ; they fought like English tars — the more they have upon them, the stronger they rise.

Several hand-grenades were thrown into the lower-deck ports of the Bellerophon, and caused great havoc amongst the men ; and had there been a breeze, they must have mustered the sails to see which were missing. The main and mizen topmast fell over the starboard side ; whilst the sails, the main-topsail, and top-gallant sails caught fire. Still they gallantly blazed away ; still they were able to show that Collingwood's line could fight under their admiral as well as the Victory's could fight under Nelson. Cheer after cheer followed, as the men saw the results of their bravery, and were convinced that the signal which had been hailed with such pride, " England expects that every man will do his duty," had been most gloriously answered by every man and boy in the fleet. If I was to give an account of what Moorsom did, and every other captain throughout the British fleet, why, I should never come to an end. But I mention the Bellerophon, because the Frenchmen became better acquainted with her afterwards.

The action had now been maintained with bravery by the French and the Spaniards for three hours. The victory was won ; ten ships had struck ; but the last sad result was yet to take place. It is of no use drawing a picture of what occurred in the midshipmen's berth of the Victory ; the greatest admiral England ever had was now stretched out breathing his last. From time to time, as the service would permit, Hardy came below and reported to the admiral how the day went. When Hardy returned and reported that ten had struck, Nelson said, " I am growing weaker and weaker ; it is impossible I can live : my back-

bone is shot through, I have no feeling below my breast, it is all gone ; — you know it," he said, as he looked at Beattie. " I know it ; I feel something rising in my breast." After a partial lull, the Victory now fired her whole larboard broadside at once ; this shook the ship from stem to stern ; then came a silence again. Nelson said, in a firm tone of voice, " Oh ! victory, victory !" and then added, " How dear is life to all men ! — Hardy," he continued, " send my CARCASS to England." — Carcass was the word : it was an odd word to use at such a moment, but I'll swear to it, for it struck me as a cool disdain of death, although he had not a minute before declared how sweet was life.

In a few minutes, Hardy, who had been on deck, returned again.

" Fourteen, my lord," he said — " fourteen have struck." A gleam of animation lighted up Lord Nelson's countenance before he died.

" I bargained for twenty !" he said. " What have you done, Hardy ? "

The captain answered, " I have sent Lieutenant Hill to Lord Collingwood, to mention you are wounded, my lord, and to beg of him to make the requisite signals."

" No other man shall command while I live, — not whilst I am alive, Hardy ! *Anchor, Hardy, anchor !*" Had that order been obeyed, in spite of all that has been said, Portsmouth harbour would have had more prizes in Rotten Row.

" God bless you, — kiss me, Hardy !" he murmured ; " kiss me."

It was now fast growing towards the last moment of his life ; and although there were many present, yet not a word was spoken.

The eye began to warn us that the hero of the Nile and Trafalgar was fast sinking. It no longer sparkled up as the cheers were heard below ; whilst he breathed with great difficulty, and when he spoke, it was in a low and indistinct voice. Once or twice he made an attempt ; but the restlessness of his spirit was fast subsiding. The chaplain stood by, and watched the last breathings of this great

man. It was then that he spoke again,—about sins and errors, which even the best of us may commit ; for he was too much of a Christian to die without acknowledging them. This done, he again thought of his King, his country,—of *her*. “Remember,” he said, “I leave her and my daughter Horatio as a legacy to my country. I have done my duty to my King ; but who shall say I have done my duty to my God !” The last words which he uttered were, “Thank God, I have done my duty !” and shortly afterwards his under jaw fell, and Nelson of the Nile was no more ! I watched his countenance : I saw the last motion of his lip ; I saw the glassy stillness of his eye—the dead cold paleness of his forehead—the fluttering tremor which shook his whole frame ; and when Beattie said, and loud enough for all to hear, “He is gone !” I fainted on the table, and was carried away to the cockpit.

CHAPTER II.

The sons of Britannia triumphant shall mourn
 The loss of her hero, of Nelson the brave,
 Who fought, bled, and conquer'd, but ne'er can return
 To claim from our gratitude more than a grave! — *Sea Song.*

WHEN I was broad awake again, I was destined to have the limb cut off—my good right arm. It was soon done, and done well ; and I remember how odd I felt when I saw one of the assistants walk away with my flipper : then it was that I became lop-sided, and had only one eye in my bows, like a Maltese boat. Just as they were finishing the parcelling which they wound round and round the stump, I heard some one groaning near me ; and there, sure enough, was Bob Matson. He had been wounded by a piece of iron in the side ; and though he lingered long enough to give the last cheer, as the last flag came down and the firing ceased, yet he never saw the sun set : before that time he was overboard. Poor fellow ! his last word was “Fanny !” Well,

his heart was in the right place ! — Bob was not the only one who had a hint. Smith, a midshipman, wrote a letter to his parents to beg them to bear “his loss with resignation for that he *was to die* in the great action.” He was right — a shot *unmanned* him ; he loosened the tourniquet after drinking a glass of water, and died. He was a brave and a good young gentleman.

In the glorious action of Trafalgar, out of the twenty for which our brave commander had bargained, we got nineteen, either taken, sunk, burnt, or wrecked. Four which escaped us were taken by Sir Richard Strachan ; and I suppose there never was, nor ever will be again, such a noise on the Atlantic.

It was not long after this fight before we were all in England again. We had placed the body of Nelson in spirits, in order to convey it safely to England, and we heard some reports about tapping the admiral. If it was done, it was of course on account of the bravery of Nelson that the seamen required some of his spirit. It is certain, that, owing to the cask in which Nelson was placed being badly headed up, when fermentation took place, the head flew off, and up jumped the admiral. The sentinel left his post without being relieved. — It was the intention of Collingwood to send the body home in the *Euryalus* ; but even I, wounded as I was, turned out to join the ship’s company in humbly begging, that, as the admiral fought with us and fell on our own deck, we might see all that was left of him safely in England.

We went to Gibraltar ; and, on the 4th of November sailed in company with the *Belleisle*, for England, — the body never being removed from the pipe of spirits in which we had placed it until the arrival of the *Victory* at Spithead. We had a long and a bad passage, for we did not arrive at Portsmouth until the 2d of December. Then every flag was hoisted half-mast, and many hundreds crowded upon the platform to see the ship which had Nelson’s body on board. Although many cursed the wind which so obstinately hindered our reaching England before, yet I blessed it ; for the delay which it caused gave time for my recovery.

I was wounded on the 21st of October, and on the 30th of November I was well again. I was short of a flipper, to be sure, and not quite so good a signal man as one who squints and looks at both lines at once ; but I was still the man that put my foot afloat with Nelson, and who had stuck by him until his death. I had yet to see him buried. When a messmate is knocked off the hooks, or loses the number of his mess from sickness or accident, who stand by the grating at the gangway when the flag is placed over him before he is launched, and who launch him, but those who have eaten, drunk, and lived with him ? Well, then, should an admiral like Lord Nelson be left to strangers ? No ; I saw it all : and although I am a man, yet I never thought the worse of myself for feeling like a man ; and when I saw the coffin for the last time, if I had had both my flippers, I could n't have swabbed up the tears, which went rushing out of my eyes like an ebb-tide at London-bridge.

When we got off Ushant, — that is, the Victory, Belleisle, and Bellerophon, — we fell in with Admiral Cornwallis and the Channel fleet. We telegraphed that we had the admiral's body on board, and the flag was shown half-mast. Cornwallis passed under our stern ; and never do I remember to have seen a more affecting sight than on that day. Willing to give us the welcome we deserved, and yet anxious to show their grief for the death of Nelson, the ship's company gave us three dumb cheers ; they waved their hats as a compliment to us, whilst they checked their voices in compliment to the dead. As the ship passed silently under our stern, the dead march in Saul was played by the band, and our comrades glided away from us silently and slowly, without a word and without a cheer.

The Victory, hardly seaworthy now, — for she had received eighty shots between wind and water, and her spars were wounded, — was ordered to Sheerness to be paid off, and we arrived on the 17th of December. There it was that I saw the very coffin which Captain Hallowell, after the Nile, had given to Nelson, brought on board ; and the last service I ever performed for him who had, when alive, been a constant friend to me and mine, was to dress the body

before it was placed in the coffin. I placed the last rigging, over his mast-head, put on the shirt, silk stockings, breeches, and tied the white handkerchief round his neck, and bound another round the forehead. The body was then sent to Greenwich; and I was allowed, by the kindness of Captain Hardy and Mr. Gray, to go on board the yacht. On the 24th we landed it, having the flag of the Victory over it. It was carried by eight of the Victory's men (I was one), and placed in the Painted Hall.

They have placed a mark upon the deck of the Victory where Nelson fell when he was wounded. Once a year, for some years afterwards, before time had a little darkened my other daylight, I used to go to look at that diamond on the deck.

Hallowell's coffin was placed in another coffin, and on a gold plate was written all the titles of Lord Nelson. On the 5th, 6th, and 7th of January, 1806, the body lay in state; and on the Sunday, when the gates were opened, several people nearly lost their lives from the rush which was made to gain admission. They got into the Hospital easily enough: but they could not get into the hall quite so easily. A party of the Victory's crew with boarding pikes was placed inside, and we soon let them see that we knew the use of them: so we got on according to orders orderly enough. We let in fifty at a time, as nearly as we could count them: they could n't all see, for it was calculated that fifty thousand people came to Greenwich on that day, and that twenty thousand returned unable to gain admittance.

The day before the funeral, forty-six seamen and fourteen marines belonging to the Victory landed at Greenwich; and every one of them had been wounded on the 21st of October. Lord Hood met them, and told them that they might go and see the last of their admiral. I was with them. I watched them; and I feel I am doing a duty to those gallant shipmates of mine when I say, that out of the whole of them, only two did not let the current of their eyes get the better of their lids: they felt as much, I dare say, although they did not show it, as the others did.

On the 8th of January Nelson was removed from Greenwich to the Admiralty. Nearly thirty years have passed since all the great men of the land and many of the crew of the Victory saw their favourite hero buried in St. Paul's. I believe every man in London was there. The river seemed more like bridges of boats than a stream of water. Guns were fired, and every soul stood uncovered as the body passed them.

On the morning of the 9th all London was alive before daylight, and soldiers were placed to keep the middle of the streets clear : hundreds and thousands witnessed the scene. The Duke of York led the line ; and amongst the great men who honoured his memory by attending him to his grave, was the Prince of Wales. Nelson was buried on that day ; and many's the time since, great men have died and been taken to their graves but we have never seen — not even when the king died, — any thing like the feeling which was uppermost on the 9th of January, 1806. I don't like even to think of it ; for on that day my kindest, best of friends, was launched for ever.

My duty done to him who had ever been my friend, as soon as my heart beat right again, I resolved to obey his last command and go to Merton. As yet I had not seen my wife ; for she was living near Rochester, on fifty pounds a year, allowed by her brother-in-law, Mr. Tapes, the wine-merchant of Exeter. She was well to do in the world, for she never ran in debt. She was not afraid of any lubberly chap in sliding gunter-boots running aboard of her like a pirate and selling her traps to pay her debts.

I went to Merton and saw *her*. It was a meeting I shall long remember. She was sitting in deep mourning before her writing-desk, on which lay a picture of Nelson : it was so like him, that I could have sworn it was alive. Her hands were clasped together, and she was crying like a child. When I got on board the room, and had put my hair straight with my hand, and lifted up my leg and bowed, she looked at me a moment, then holding her hands open, and clasping them in an agony of grief, she ran forward to greet me.

"Come here, Brace," said she; "sit down. Don't mind my tears, I will endeavour to command them."

For some moments, however, she remained in uncontrollable grief. At last, with eyes drowned in tears, she thus began: — "You were present at the moment of his death; relate to me all he said. What were his last words? Did he speak of me — did he?"

I was all aboard; her greeting had taken me smack aback, and before I could get round on the other tack, I found myself at anchor, and this beautiful lady close athwart my hawse. I should soon have moored ship and made myself comfortable; but when I saw her wringing her white hands as if she had been one of the foretopmen wringing swabs, I somehow felt a kind of shiver, and I believe I looked as white as a ghost.

"You are ill," she said: "I hope I did not hurt your arm?"

"No, ma'am," said I. If I had been at that moment seized up to the gangway, or had the yard-rope round my neck, I could not have said another word. I felt myself trying to bolt my tongue, and I knew that I was any thing else but a man.

"Tell me, trusty old friend and companion, — tell me now, did he speak of me? I can bear it all now; tell me what he said."

There was something so hurried in her manner — something so wild in her eyes, which now were dry and burning, that I was alarmed; and that alarm made me myself again. I began, —

"When he was wounded, my lady ——"

"Yes! yes!" she interrupted; "never mind that form, — go on."

"He sent for me," I continued. "He knew it was all over with him in this world, and so he told the doctor. He told me to put my ear close to his mouth, and then he whispered, 'When you get home, go to Merton, — see her — tell her I have left a memorial in her behalf——'"

"I care not," she said, in a tone of voice which startled me, "about memorials! Tell me what he said about me."

"It's all about you, ma'am," I continued.

“ ‘Tell her,’ ” I continued, “ the admiral said, — ‘Tell her that even now, when all is shortly to pass away, I thought of her — that my last prayer was for her ; — tell her — ’ ”

She heard no more ; but throwing herself upon her knees she offered up a prayer.

At this moment the door opened, and little Jane, dressed in black, came into the room. She stopped in an instant as if suddenly struck with fear ; when she saw her whom she considered as her mother on her knees.

The child did not know me ; for when I saw *her* throw herself upon her knees, I bowed my head down low and kept my hand over my face. “ Oh ! mamma, mamma ! ” cried out the little innocent thing, throwing herself on her neck, crying.

“ It’s Brace,” *she* said.

No sooner did Jane look up, than she ran instantly to me. When she saw that one of my arms was gone, however, and one eye closed, she cried bitterly.

Though I had seen some distressing scenes in my time, and had been in the cockpit when arms and legs were not worth belonging to their owners, yet I never felt as I did then. *She* remained for some time kneeling, but at last she rose, kissed the picture over and over again, and left the room.

Jane was much improved in appearance. She continued looking me full in the face without saying a word. “ Cheer up, my little angel ! ” said I ; “ what do you cry for ? ” Still, however, she said not a word, but taking hold of the sleeve of my jacket, she shook it, and then burst out a-crying.

“ Oh, is that all ? ” said I : “ don’t mind that. The Frenchman who knocked it off won’t come to shake hands with me ; and I’ll ‘make him a present of my eye — a dead eye will serve his turn now.”

Lady H. now came in again. She came to the chair upon which she had been seated before, and said, “ Now you will not see any more of this woman’s weakness. It’s hard—very hard to part with those we love—for whom we have sacrificed our own and the world’s esteem, and

such a one as he was : but it is done, — he is dead and buried, and we must strive to surmount what we cannot control. Now, tell me slowly again all that passed — the very words."

I told her all again ; for after the action, when my arm was off, and I in my hammock, young Pollard, one of the midshipmen, he who stood on the poop to be shot at like a chicken tied to a stake, came to see me. After asking how I felt, and showing a kind feeling for me, he said he would do any thing he could for me. " Well, sir," said I, " the only favour I have to ask of you is to get a pen and ink and a piece of paper, and write down what I am going to tell you."

He thought I had received some hint about fitting foreign, and that the amputation was like greasing the ways before the dry shores are slapped off. He looked me in the face, " No, no, Brace," said he, very kindly, " no fear of that now. Before I came to see you, I asked Dr. Beattie what he thought of your case, and he laughed and said, ' In three weeks' time he 'll be standing on the poop with a glass under his arm again, learning to make his left eye do duty for his right.' "

I understood him, and told him it was not that at all ; that I had no fears about going abroad without sailing orders ; but that I wanted him to put down the words which Nelson had whispered to me before his death. This he did ; and by way of making *her* convinced that I had not spoken one word more than *he* had said, I showed her the paper, which I had tied up in the corner of my neck-handkerchief. This seemed to please her, and she read it over and over again, and asked about Mr. Pollard, and then made me relate the events of the whole day from beginning to end.

Occasionally she stopped me during the running up of the log, and would ask whether, when he first saw the fleet his right-arm stump worked about as it used to do, and then whether he thrust his left into his coat-pocket as he was accustomed to do when much excited. But when I came to the wound and the cockpit scene, she never said a word, but kept her eyes fixed upon me.

Twice she made me run over the action ; then folding up the paper, she put it in her desk.

"Brace," she said, "it was Nelson's earnest desire that Jane should remain with me. She shall accordingly be provided for, and you shall never want. What do you intend doing?"

"Why, ma'am," said I, "I think it's all right for those to serve me whom I have served ; and as I have served for years and years, and have left an eye and an arm behind me, and, besides, been with Nelson since he put his foot afloat, I think I may ask for Greenwich without being impertinent. As for what you've read me, ma'am, this is all I have got to say about it: I would rather have been Nelson's coxswain, messmate, shipmate, and servant, than be any captain in his majesty's service excepting one, and that man is Captain Hardy. I'm much obliged to you, ma'am,—very," said I ; "but if I go any where, I must go to Gosport, for I have a friend there (I meant Susan) in great distress about my hull being so cut about, and I must endeavour to see her more comfortable.

"In regard to Jane, ma'am, she cannot do better than to stay with one who has been so kind to her ; and for myself, I only beg that you will assist my claim, to be admitted into Greenwich. There, since I can no longer serve afloat, I can keep life and soul together, and perhaps, before the signal is given to part company, I may meet many more of my old friends. God bless you, Jane." I gave the child a squeeze, and making my best bow, I backed and filled out of the room like a collier tiding it down the River. She said she would not forget me, and that, before the day was over, she should have an opportunity of being of some service to me.

When I got clear of the harbour, I began to trim my sails according to the breeze. To say that I liked her would be a falsehood ; I never liked her enough to call her by name, and I never will do so. Some, who handle pens more like knives than paper-stainers, have abused her in a manner not unlike some of our women at Billingsgate ; but she was a woman with all the spirit of a man and all the weakness of her own sex ; she had love

enough for twenty men, but she was jealous and revengeful. When the Neapolitan prince was hung she showed more of the fury than the woman. When Nelson died, she became natural. She was beautiful beyond description: when she spoke, she looked through you; and although Nelson stood all the guns at Aboukir, he could not stand the broadside of her eyes. She had a figure and form which became the study of the painter: she was like Mount Etna,—all quiet and cold without, all fire and heat within. She humbled him who had humbled thousands; she conquered him whom the whole world could not conquer; she occasioned the only spot upon the character, public or private (for the execution of that prince was her work), of the greatest admiral England or the world ever saw. Then, when I shook all these contradictions together, making a kind of punch of the mixture, I came to the same conclusion as the Irishman in the after-guard who was employed handing a hawser up the after-hatchway, — “That no doubt the rope was strong enough to hang a thousand men, but that he was very glad to have seen the end of it.” So was I: I never hoped or wished to see her again. She was powerful enough to have ruined a thousand men; and all I can say for Nelson is, that had he withstood her charms, he must have been something more than a man, or something less than one.

I was discharged from the Victory; and that was the last ship I ever put my foot on board of. I visited her frequently afterwards, but I never went on board any other ship. I had now nothing to do but to look out for myself and Susan, and leave Jane under the care of *her*, and let her take any slant of wind which might lead to a comfortable anchorage for life: I therefore steered down to Gosport. I was not afraid of a press-gang then.

It was in June 1806 that I saw Susan. “Here am I, Susan, half my masts knocked away and my top-light out; but my heart,” said I, “just as true to you as it was when we parted company at Cawsand some years ago.” She was looking right well: she had got stout again; and the cottage seemed so cheerful and so nice, that I thought

in a moment, now Nelson was dead and I a cripple, that I could spin out the rest of life comfortably.

"You are come to stay, Ben," said Susan; "I will take care of you. Although you have been wounded, you are the same man, and I never can sufficiently repay your kindness."

"Yes, you can," said I; "yes, Susan, my dear Susan, you can."

She understood me. I offered my only hand, as I said, "It sha'n't be a left-handed marriage." She took it—we were married. It is now nine-and-twenty years since she became mine, and I should lie in my throat if I ever said one word against her. She has borne with all my riotings, even when I heard of that gallant fellow Exmouth, who knocked the stones about those Algerines' heads. Never have I seen Susan out of temper: she is just what a woman ought to be—even tempered, religious, good.

For the first week we talked of nothing but Nelson and the action; and if I had been given to liquor, I never need have paid for the value of a pint of beer. All England was alive to the consequences of this noble victory: the sea was clear, and it was imagined a peace would soon follow. Many and many's the time that I have been stopped and questioned about the admiral; and my poor wife began to think, from the kindness I received, that I might one day be first lord of the admiralty, or governor of Greenwich.

The paper I received from Tackle turned out not altogether amiss. I soon started for Exeter, and going to the gentleman's house, according to the direction, "Sir," said I, "here is a packet left by your brother, who died aboard the hulks; and here is Tackle's oath:—No," said I, "that I have got at home. Read this first, sir."

He did not like it. He turned and he twisted the paper, and then asked me if I knew Tackle. "Certainly," said I; "and I know you. Now listen, sir. Your brother is dead, but Susan and her children live. If you do as you ought to do, the secret shall die with me: if not, there's Tackle, and I, and Susan ——"

"Stop," said he, "don't talk so loud: I'll give Susan

fifty pounds a-year for ever, and when I die I'll double it."

"It's a bargain, sir! and Ben Brace never broke his word."

"I have heard of you before," said he.

"I make no matter of doubt of that, sir," I replied: "and every one else in the country, I hope," says I, scraping my foot a bit, "has heard of Nelson's coxswain. But we must have the lawyers to work, sir."

"I understand," said he. "Call here to-morrow." The next day a regular deed—a good deed I called it—was drawn up; and ever since that the money has been regularly paid. But he made me bring Tackle's paper; and after overhauling it closely, to see that it had not been opened, he took a curious old seal out of his desk, and he claps his own signal on the letter, saying, "If this is opened and read, I stop the money—do you understand? If you keep the secret, which I dare say has been entrusted to you, you shall never want, or your wife, or her children. Now, steer away, and don't let me see you again, for you know too much for me to like you." So, as soon as I had pocketed the letter and drunk his health in some smuggled brandy, I steered back to my wife, and made her happy with the news.

But although Susan cut and contrived, and I never threw away a piece of tobacco, yet we saw just as clearly as we saw the church, that my coming in amongst the squadron would occasion a greater expense: the prize-money for Trafalgar was yet to be paid, and *she* on whom I was to rely had been left as a legacy to the country, and had little enough for herself.

I therefore saw it was of no use eating the bread of idleness, and I could not turn my hand to any thing; so I got a gentleman, who behaved kindly to me, to write to Captain Hardy about Greenwich. I did not ask in vain: about a week afterwards I received a letter, desiring me to present myself at the Hospital for inspection; and a fortnight from the receipt of the letter, there was I, Ben Brace, moored for life in the snug harbour for worn-out shipping. No longer did I wear a straw-hat with a broad ribband and

Victory upon it ; and my large trowsers, round jacket, and long-quartered shoes were laid up in ordinary. I now saw myself in a gold-laced scraper, a large blue coat, which I kept close buttoned for the first week rather than show my slender shanks : then came a pair of buckles, to finish off. I held on my tail ; for although they clapped me into dock to repair my hull, and rigged me afresh from stem to stern, yet I would n't allow the barber to cut off the tow-rope of my head, and I had it parcelled up and stowed away under my collar.

I told Susan to weigh her anchor from Gosport and to rendezvous at Greenwich, and I got a decent cottage outside of the gates. When she was safely in port, I began to look about me, and to think of all I had gone through until this time. I had seen the seas roll over thousands—had rocked about the world like a child in a cradle—had been tossed about like sea-weed, but at last had taken fast hold of the land : I had seen the slave at his work in the West, and the Turk at his pipe in the East,—had sawed through the ice of the North, and had weathered the gales at the Cape, but I was now for life a Greenwich pensioner.

CHAPTER III.

Yet still I am enabled
To bring up in life's rear,
Although I 'm quite disabled,
And lie in Greenwich tier.—*DIMBY.*

It was in 1806 that I moored for a full due ; and day after day and year after year passed along, bringing no changes but the weather out of doors, and now and then a new pensioner without a leg inside. As we dropped off, there we were laid ; and I felt a curious change from the rough life I had led, to the steady one I was now called upon to pursue.

In Greenwich we have each our cabin—at least it is

so with the oldest of us. Now and then one or two are clapped into the same berth ; and it requires some good management to stow away more than two thousand of us. Of course, amongst such a number I found many of my old shipmates : some who had sailed with Nelson in the *Agamemnon* ; some who had been on board the *Vanguard*, and made a jump from the Nile to Greenwich ; and all who had seen much service.

It was a great change in my life, from the constant employment of a ship to the quiet of the Hospital. Amongst the number of old, armless, legless men heaped together in this huge palace, I remarked that nearly all had grown more thoughtful ; that, although we fought our battles over and over again, the manner of relating them was much altered. Very few of those oaths which are so common round the galley-fire, or under the lee of the weather-bulwark, were used ; and on Sunday, when we all mustered in our clean rigging, I always remarked that after church some of the oldest amongst us got upon the benches with Bibles in their hands. There the old fellows might be seen with their legs crossed and their spectacles wiped, reading with much attention what before they had long neglected. For myself, as may be seen, I had never joined in all the wild sprees of my shipmates. I had been made a companion in his first adventures by Nelson ; and he, although he had a little of the devil in his composition, never was one of the shore-going rioters. He was always, as the black fellows say, "Working head-work, massa," and more steady than his messmates.

The first thing I found when I was admitted on the books of the Hospital, and made a boatswain's mate (for I had held a petty-officer's rating ever since I had been on board the *Boreas* in 1784), was, that the provisions were as much as a man could eat with his wife's assistance ; and the tobacco-money, although it would not buy the Lord Mayor's barge, which we saw every now and then all gilt and ginger-bread like a beadle's coat, yet it lent a hand at the cottage to make Susan more comfortable. She was perhaps better off than any other man's wife in Greenwich.

It must be a man with the stomach of a boy who can

get through the allowance. We had seven loaves of bread, five pounds of meat, a pint of peas, a pound and a quarter of cheese, two ounces of butter, and fourteen quarts of beer in a week, and eighteen-pence for tobacco. Who amongst the whole ships' companies in the Navy, I should like to know, would begrudge the sixpence a month he pays to Greenwich, when in his old days, after all the stuff of youth is worked up into twice-laid cordage, only fit to be kept dry, and not have much strain upon it, he is moored in a palace — better than belongs to any king in the world ; where he is fed without fear of the purser's steward being a cheat ; where he is nursed when he is ill, and buried amongst his old shipmates when he is dead ? This is not all for us alone : any man who has been rendered unfit for sea-service by defending any ship belonging to an English subject, may have the satisfaction, although he was in the merchant-service, of dying amongst the best of us in Greenwich.

Many a time I have thought, that although it does look very hard to be pressed into service, where a man begins by being sea-sick and finishes by being short of a leg or so, and is made to follow a life he never likes ; yet, when he gets old, and moors in Greenwich, I don't think any one who had been pressed would say it was a bad day's work when they docked his coat-tails and made his own tail grow. I've talked to hundreds of them about it, and I never knew one who did not think the pressgang the best gang he ever got amongst. All I know is, that it now is many a year since I first shipped the uniform and stuck on a cocked-hat ; and although I have been wandering about for nearly thirty years, yet I never had cause to complain of a harsh word being used towards me, and I have never been unhappy for an hour since I came within the gates.

Our lives went on steadily enough, and we often at the end of the year sat down and wondered how we had got through three hundred and sixty-five days. Years and years however crept away until the latter end of 1816, without any thing happening to change my thoughts. I was growing older and older, and yet I was a stout able-bodied man, and at a pinch might have gone afloat again.

Once or twice at the beginning of my being a pensioner, Jane had come down to see me; she always brought a little money, but she stayed a very short time. As she grew up to be a woman, she became less frequent in her visits, until at last, I suppose she got ashamed of being seen walking with me; and after 1814, when she was about sixteen years of age, she forgot poor old Ben Brace, — at least I thought so, — and for years she never came again.

I had been rather ill about this time, and as my wife was admitted as one of the nurses, every care was taken of me. At the close of 1816 I was out again, having undergone a thorough repair, and being ready to ride out any gale. I was walking about, wondering of what use I was, when I saw an economical pensioner stumping along. He had lost both legs, and therefore had no occasion for the blue stockings; he had shipped on the regulation-pins, and looked for all the world like a barrel of beer upon stumps. Well, when I saw that he was not used to his new timbers, but that he laboured heavily, and every now and then, when a squall took his three-corned scraper and nearly lifted it off his noddle, in putting up his hand to save it, his balance was not quite sure, but he pitched like a Billygoat before he got steady again, I made sail to lend him a hand. It was dangerous however to come alongside of him, for his arms were flying about like the telegraph on the top of the Hospital.

When I got within hail, I offered him assistance, seeing that he had been so riddled about the hull that he was scarcely sea-worthy; and he answered, —

“I shall never weather the corner, messmate, unless you take me in tow; for I find it preciously difficult to keep upon an even keel with these moveable shores; and although I have got these two sticks, like shrouds to a wounded mast, yet I always feel as if I was going by the board. If I get upon my beam-ends, I shall never right again!”

“Why, shipmate,” said I, “you have not practised long upon this tack, I should think, and you look pretty weak in the bends; I take it that a man does not lose both

his pins without being on his beam-ends for some time." As I made this remark, I looked at the poor fellow's face which was so thin and wizened that it might have done for a lantern and not hid much of the light. His cocked-hat, placed athwart-ships, did not come sufficiently over his head, and I never remember to have seen such a woe-begone phiz since I was a pensioner. He stopped every now and then, but at last I brought him to an anchor on one of the benches just in time to save him from fainting.

"I shall get used to these timbers in time, I suppose," said he; "but it is hard work for the knees. I never used to trouble them much before, and now they don't like the work; — it makes me feel sea-sick again."

"Ay," said I, "it will all come right in time. When we are young, it requires lots of practice before we can toddle upon the legs we are born with; and when we get old, we never learn so quickly as when we were young. But tell us, shipmate, where did you lose them?"

"At Algiers," he replied; "and the devil take all Turks who ever smoked pipes and wore turbans! I should not have minded one, and then to have got Greenwich; but to slap them both off with one shot was sharp work — and for me, too, who have been in so many actions and escaped. It is, as you say, rather hard to learn even patience when one's old. I never could wait without kicking my heels at the grog-tub when first I went to sea, and I was one of the worst hands on board to stand doing nothing at quarters when the ship was in a blaze and only the firemen at work."

"What ward are you in?" I asked.

"The Victory," said he: "but I'm hardly clear of the sick-list yet; and in this squally weather, with the wind veering about like a dog-vane in a calm, with rain one moment and a glimpse of the sun the next, I feel my feet itching and aching just as plainly as if they were on."

"What actions were you in, messmate, besides this one against the stone walls? — and a good one it was!"

"What actions! I'm blessed if I must not look up my memory and shake my noddle before I shall remember them all. Why, I was in the Surveillance, and was blown

up. That was an action I never wished to try again, for, if I had lost my legs then, I should have been drowned. — Well, then, I was in St. Vincent's."

"What ship?" said I quickly; "what ship, messmate?"

"Why, I was in the *Agamemnon* with Nelson."

"In the *Agamemnon* with Nelson? — I don't remember you."

"Nor I you in that three-cornered Portuguese man-of-war-looking skull-thatcher," said he; "but just take the top off your mast-head, and if you've a feature left in your face, I'm not the one to forget an old shipmate, however much bad weather and rough usage may alter him."

I took off my hat and flattened my hair down over my forehead and lugged out my tail, and then looking him in the face, said, "Now, shipmate, take a good overhaul; who do you think I am?"

"Why," said he in a moment, "if you had another toplight, and got your starboard David on again, I should say that you would be very like Ben Brace."

"Give us a flipper, messmate! I'm he, snug enough. But who the devil are you? I don't remember you at all."

"No wonder, Ben," he said, as he shook me with a friendly grip by the hand — "no wonder; when half a man has fed the sharks, t'other half never looks like what it was. I'm thinking, too, when men lose both their legs, they get like hump-backed people, all alike in the face. But now look at me without this gold-laced topper, — don't you know me now?"

"No more, shipmate," said I, "than if you were a Turk."

"Then I'm blessed if poor Tom Toprail is not changed for somebody else; and I wish I had his legs, whoever he may be."

"Lord love you, Tom!" said I; "why, is it you, or only a part of you? Let's look at you again. Why, you're as thin as a midshipman's boy, and your clothes hang upon you like a purser's shirt on a handspike; your nose has got a slew to starboard, and the tow-rope of your

head is as white as a hawser under water. But now I look at you again, you are something like him. Well, tell us all about it; how have they used you lately?"

"Oh, well enough, Ben," he replied, "until this last affair against those Turks: I got through Trafalgar without a scratch. I got spliced one day and drew it the next, as I told you before. "And now," continued he, "I must be off, and get upon my broadside, for I feel as if this wind is not doing me any good. Lord, Ben! how odd it is for a seaman to be afraid of the wind! but just now I feel all the pains of the devil shooting right through me; and I'm told not to be out in the gale when there's a snug harbour for my hull. Give us a lift, that's a good fellow; I heard that you were safe landed here. There, gently, Ben — I almost wish I had been one of those priests we used to see at Malta, who made more use of their knees than they did of their feet; but I can tell you it is hard work to weigh now, so I'm coming to an anchor in my own cabin."

CHAPTER IV.

So in Misfortune's school grown tough,
In this same sort of knowledge,
Thinking, mayhap, I 'd not enough,
They sent me here to college;

And here we tell old tales, and smoke,
And laugh, while we are drinking;
Sailors, you know, will have their joke,
Even though the ship were sinking.— DIBDIN.

TOM had not lost any of his fun or of his spirit, and every now and then, when his eye blazed up, I had no doubt in my own mind that in a little time he would be able to spin out his yarn as well as the best. I got my old nurse, my wife, to look after him; for time had made her accustomed to her work, and knowing old Tom was a friend of mine through life, she looked after him kindly. When Tom

was not in pain, he used to have his legs clapped on a stool, and wonder how any man could wear his own, when he never could get wet feet, and wanted no shoes or stockings. Tom had fitted up his cabin with a print of the Royal Sovereign, and he hung his Trafalgar medal up, and kept it as polished and as bright as a marine does the buttons of his best jacket. But my old messmate was not clear of the coffin-maker yet, and any fall would have placed the D. D.* on the books against his name. Even Tom, himself, who did not fear death any more than a lad who picks plums out of rum in a blaze, once or twice began to think that he was unmoored, and his anchor at a short stay-peak. By degrees, however, he got better, and as he found his spirits restored, so he began, according to his own plan through life, to replenish them. Tom was always a right good one at a glass of grog, and now when old and more than half gone, for he had both legs in the grave, when he could balance himself so as to walk with only the assistance of his crutches, he pegged away to the Dolphin, and there blew his cloud and drank his grog regardless of any consequences.

I felt as if I was young again when I saw old Tom ; — all the former scenes in the Mediterranean when we were on board the Agamemnon used to rise up before me, and often and often did we spin our yarns over and over again.

“ Well, Tom,” said I to him one day, “ you have never given me a sketch of what became of you after your marriage. Your wife married the soldier, you know, and left you before she got the allotment ; at that time I was up in London about Nelson’s funeral and getting Greenwich, and I have lost sight of you ever since.”

“ And no wonder, Ben,” he replied ; “ you don’t see half as much as you used to see : but I’ll tell you. After the Sovereign was paid off, I took a cruise to London myself, and all the money I got from Moses’s allowance for the Trafalgar prize-money, and my pay at the back of it, soon got into other pockets. I first of all went to Portsmouth

* Discharged, dead ; the usual way, on board a man-of-war, of writing a man’s epitaph.

to see if I could find my wife, and I steered away to the Jolly Sailors. The old landlord was at home, and I sat down and blew a cloud with him. 'Well,' said I, 'old boy, have you seen my wife?'

" 'Your wife!' said he! 'why, to be sure I did; I saw her after she married the lobster. They started off for Ireland, where his regiment was quartered, and neither of them have been back since. To be sure, it's not more than a month ago altogether, and I don't well see, if they get across the water, how they could have been back.'

" 'In course,' says I, 'she was married under a purser's name?'

" 'Not she,' said the landlord. 'Her name was Elizabeth Susan Matson; she married you as Betsy Matson, and she married the soldier as Susan Matson. The clerk swore he knew her again, although she had changed her colours, for this time she wore red ribbons: she answered that she was Betsy's twin sister, and as much like as two peas. This silenced the clerk, and they were married.'

" This settled all I had to know; and although I did still love Betsy, yet I could not forgive her exactly, so I got drunk and forgot her. The next day I shipped myself on board a stage-coach, and back I went to Tower Hill. It was not long before I was hauled up before the mayor, locked up in the lock-house, run aboard of by land pirates, and cleaned out, with store-room brushed, and not a shot in the locker. I had, therefore, nothing for it but to volunteer again; and before a fortnight was over my head, I was a quarter-master on board the *Arethusa*, commanded by Captain Charles Brisbane, as gallant an officer as ever led his ship into an enemy's harbour or caught hold of a Frenchman at sea. We were off to the West Indies; and although, Ben, I had been burnt there once before, I'm blessed if I don't think it gets hotter and hotter, until one of these days I expect to hear that Jamaica is all in a blaze, and the black fellows burning like tallow-candles.

" As far as Yellow Jack was concerned, we got off pretty well; he took his proportion, for he's never asleep; and when we got ashore at Barbadoes on the watering-party, some of us went about a week afterwards much far-

ther under the water than ever we expected. Well, that yellow fever is the devil himself!

"We had not long been there,—I mean in Jamaica,—when we were joined by the *Latona*, and *Anson*, and put to sea in company with them. We were beating up towards the island of *Curaçoa*, when we fell in with the *Fisguard*, and she hauled her wind and joined the squadron.

"Towards the close of the year (and we had made a merry Christmas of it) we began fore and aft the decks to think something was in the wind. Although we were always kept pretty sharp at our work, yet now we fancied that we were practised at quarters more than at reefing topsails; and whenever the captains of the other ships came on board, they always got talking together more earnestly. Then it would be 'Quarters again'—then 'Carry all sail'—then it would be 'Quarter-master, the glass;' and after a good look, 'Tack ship, stand off under all sail,' then 'Heave-to;' 'Captains come on board to supper;' lots of talking again. Although it was Christmas time, it was as sure as that sugar grows in Jamaica that we should get something more than sugar-plums to eat before a week was over our heads.

"Well, Ben, the last day of the old year we had got off *Curaçoa*, and we got talking over old times, when the usual beat to quarters took place, men were mustered, the 'All sober and present' reported (for I stood at the wheel and saw and heard it all), when, instead of saying as we expected, 'Beat the retreat, and let the men make merry to-night,' or 'Splice the main brace,' or any such good news, the captain called out, 'Clear for action, and let the carpenters see the fire-screens in order. Send the gunner here.' Old Pounce came along the deck thinking something was wrong; but the captain asked him how much powder he had filled, and spoke about going to the magazine, and so on. When every thing was ready, he went round the decks himself, and says he, 'My men, you will have pretty tight work of it before this time to-morrow.' Then came the retreat, leaving the ship clear for action, and the guns secured by the tackles alone. 'Pipe the hammocks down,' said the captain, 'and don't disturb the men during the night more than is absolutely requisite. It was then very

light breezes and fine weather ; the land, just as the sun went down, was reported from the mast-head, and the squadron was seen standing towards it.

“ Well, the devil an enemy did we see ; and we could n’t make out what we were going to fight ; for there was nothing but the island, the water, and the sky in sight ; and we had never heard of any thing but one or two Dutch ships in Curaçoa, and they were not very likely to start. But the captain soon cleared up our doubts ; for before we had time to hang up our hammocks, the hands were turned up and sent aft.

“ ‘ My men,’ said Brisbane, ‘ I expect that to-night the inhabitants of the island of Curaçoa will drink the old year out and the new year in ; and, by the blessing of Providence, they will get more strange ships in their harbour than they bargain for just now. To-morrow morning, at daylight, if the breeze freshens, I shall be at anchor inside that harbour ; and before eight o’clock the island will be ours. I sha’n’t say any thing to you, my lads, about your duty ; you know pretty well what sailors can do, and I know that I can rely upon you. — The marines must be all ready to land in an instant,’ said he, addressing the marine officer, ‘ and they will be in garrison by nine,’ he remarked with a smile. ‘ Pipe down !’

“ We all, as if the boatswain’s mate had whistled the warning at our ears, gave three hearty cheers, and each ship of the squadron repeated it. In course, we got talking about this on the forecastle, and some of the men who had seen the place said, ‘ I know the entrance is only fifty yards wide ; and there’s a place there called Fort Amsterdam, which has sixty-six barkers, all shoving their heads out, like chickens in a coop when the butcher feeds them. Then there’s the squadron, and Fort Republic, which can blaze grape over every blessed inch of the harbour.’

“ ‘ Is that all ?’ said another chap : ‘ why, it’s not half enough. What of the narrow harbour ? — the less way the Jollies will have to go before they tow a line ashore.’

“ ‘ Well,’ said the boatswain’s mate, as he came forward, ‘ I expect to be made boatswain of the theatre, and pipe the curtain up : this will be a rare go, sure.’

“ ‘Come, my lads,’ said the officer of the watch, ‘get as much sleep as you can, and we shall have time enough to talk about the theatre to-morrow.’ ”

“About four o’clock in the morning, when the watch was relieved, the hammocks were stowed without any ‘piping up,’ the land was close on board of us, the other ships all in line, and the captain on deck. He was looking out with the master for the entrance of the harbour; and this bothered him a little, until just at daybreak, when we made it out clear enough. ‘Make sail!’ was the order; and in a jiffy every sail was set, and we standing right into a hole in the island, which looked about as broad as from Sally Port to Gosport.

“Whether the Dutchmen had been bousing their jibs up or not I can’t say, but we soon began to think the captain was right, and that they had taken so much schnaps the night before that they couldn’t open their eyes, or that when they did they saw double, for they never began to fire, although our jib-boom seemed poking the officer out of his bed. There were we, only four of us, going into this place, spanking along at a fine rate; and from the look of the entrance we all thought the captain was going to run us on shore to take the barnacles off the ship’s bottom. Whilst we were wool-gathering about this, we saw a Dutch frigate, the *Halstaar*, a sloop, the *Surinam*, and two large schooners, moored across the narrow entrance. It was then getting on to good daylight. We shortened sail, and ran smack on board the frigate: she was boarded and taken before the first lieutenant knew what was the reason of the row. The Jollies were whipped ashore, and in spite of the most cursed fire of grape, canister, and round-shot, they hopped about like tumblers at a fair, jumped into Fort Amsterdam, and by seven o’clock frigates and fort had an English jack on board of them.

“I don’t know, Ben, who were the most surprised, we or the Dutchmen: to think we ever should get into such a hole without being sunk, and to find that by ten o’clock, four hours after we had opened our fire, our flag was flying upon Fort Republic, and the whole island, with ships, shipping, batteries, Dutchmen, coffee, and cocoa-nuts, were

ours ! So blind drunk must these fellows have been, that they only killed three men, and wounded eleven.

"That was my first caper after Trafalgar."

CHAPTER V.

A sailor's narrative resembles a ship's course in working to windward, which is fain to yield obliquely to the blast in order to weather her object indirectly, and fetch her port in the end. — CAPT. GLASCOCK.

"It's blowing great guns and small arms at sea now," said I to Tom the next day, "and I'm blessed if I don't think we are just as snug in this good-looking receiving-ship, Greenwich Hospital, as if we were bobbing about like a fisherman's float in the Bay of Biscay. Considering, moreover, that you might stir any fire in England with your feet without burning your toes, I think, old boy, you would find it easier to stump to the Dolphin than scud up the rigging."

"Maybe," replied Tom ; "and I think, Ben," said he. "you would find it, with your one fin, easier to drink to the health of our Sailor King, than to turn in a dead-eye."

"That's personal," said I. "Like your betters, Tom, you don't see more with your two top-lights than I do with my one. However, I should have no objection to turn in any thing else but another *dead-eye*. Although you have no regular service legs, yet, for a pair of dock-yard pins, they are as good as any carpenter's yeoman could rummage from the store-room : and as *good*, the parson says, comes out of evil, so you never need cut your corns or buy any blacking to polish your shoes."

"That's what I call *fortune de guerre*, as the Frenchman used to say," replied Tom, "when he made a mistake, and, instead of getting into Brest or Toulon, used to be out of his reckoning, and by some devilish bad fortune find himself snugly housed not a score of miles from Ports-

mouth. But come along, Ben Brace, my old Polyphemus; and, as you will have your blind eye to windward, I'll keep to leeward of you, or you'll make so much lee-way you'll never fetch the port. — There, starboard you may a bit, and we shall get out of harbour here without running foul of the gates."

"Much obliged for the pilotage, Tom," I replied; "but as I sail better than you, I'll take you in tow. If it was not personal, I should say, seeing that I remark all things, that you would be like a small craft astern of a vessel which had lost its rudder: you would have to look out and steer her, whilst she towed you along. There, I'm smack in the gutter; that all comes, without being personal like, of your not considering that I *can* wet my feet."

"*Fortune de guerre*," said Tom, as he was passing along a slippery part of the quay; up went both legs, and he was making a stern board, as he slid down the inclined plane, his timber toes sticking out like the catheads of a ship, his cocked-hat swimming away like a Portuguese man-of-war, and he himself never stopping until he was fairly launched. A crowd of watermen soon restored the old boy to his equilibrium. I once more took him in tow, we fetched the tap, and were very shortly as comfortably employed in smoking as the most arrant tobacconist could ever have wished to see us.

"Tom," said I, "that taking of Curaçoa was a gallant affair; for it's not every man who will run into a harbour bristling with guns and stocked with soldiers and sailors. How many had you?"

"How many?" said Tom. "Why, we did not muster altogether more than seven hundred and fifty. The enemy might have eaten us, and no trouble either."

"Well, where did you steer to after that, Tom?"

"Steer to?" said Tom; "why, we steered about the West Indies and home again, and so on until 1809, when I was drafted on board the *Bucephalus*, and went to Flushing. We did not make much of that, although it was much harder work than Curaçoa. I don't know how it is, old shipmate," he continued, "but we sailors never get on so well when we have to act with the soldiers:

either the ships get there before the time, or the soldiers are beat before we come up. I think the best plan is always to have it to ourselves ; then, if we are touched up roughly, why, we slip our cables, loose sails, and they may blaze away until they are blind ; but when it comes to covering retreats, as they call it, why we are sure to botch the business. I never shall forget some of our lads afterwards in America being shoved ashore with a musket to march with the soldiers, and when a herd of swine hove in sight, did n't we fire at them — that 's all, and chase them till we heard, 'Halt ! halt !' We never came to a heave-to, however, until we had got a string-halt on the pig's hind-legs, and then we moored the whole fleet of them, with a cable each way. After all, they were the best prisoners we made.

" I 'm all adrift with Flushing, and certainly know little about it ; for, with the exception of firing at a low town with rockets and shells, and running in and out of shoals — aground one moment and afloat the next — it's very little we did, and the soldiers did no more. But, Lord ; Ben, how they died ! Sheep with the rot was a joke to them ! They went off worse than at Jamaica in the sickly season ; not all the Scheedam, or the schnaps of Beverland, could save them.

" Well, talking 's dry work ; and this is the first time I have ever come to an anchor in the Dolphin. Although I swore never to have any more grog for a fortnight, yet I think I must treat resolution to a glass, and my promise to a pipe. Here ! hulloa ! ship ahoy !"

Old Jorum the landlord freshened hawse for Tom ; who, when he had got his pipe in his mouth and his grog before him, looked like a real pensioner, who had left his legs and his cares behind him, began to talk of past days, and it was some time before I got him on the right tack to finish his sea-service before he ran ashore for ever. He was always laying his anchors out to windward, and after he had asked after the little Jorums, he wore ship.

" I say, Jorum," he began, " I suppose you know that eighteen-pence a-week would n't pay you if I keep treating resolution and promise to a pipe and a glass ; so I should

like to understand how long my score may be before you clap a stopper upon it."

"Why, Mr. Toprail," said Jorum, "these are hard times; and although we have peace and plenty, I think it ought to be called peace and poverty. One's obliged to turn his money every new moon for luck, and take as much of it as one can get from a customer: but with you, who have so often danced at my old place at Plymouth, and spent your prize-money like a sailor, why, I sha'n't be hard with you; and so I'll make this agreement with you, — to give you a glass every Saturday night, providing you get me a peep at the bullet which killed Lord Nelson."

"Why, Jorum," said Tom, "you might as well ask for the tail of the donkey that carried the Brazilian officer, when some sailors caught hold of both of them at Rio Janeiro, clapped them in the launch, and had them hoisted on board instead of a water-cask."

Jorum turned round, and I said to Tom, "Clench him, Tom! I know all about it."

"Well, that's a bargain," said Tom; "and give us your hand upon it, old fellow." That was done, and Tom went on with his yarn.

"From the *Bucephalus* I was drafted into the *Boyne*, and went to the Mediterranean. Then we got to the old place, blockading Cape Secie, and looking out for another *Trafalgar*; and if we could have got them out far enough to smell salt-water, Sir Peter Parker, in the *Menelaus* frigate, would have given them a little trouble, just to keep them employed until we could get alongside.

"That was a fleet, Ben! I have seen them both — I saw and served in them both. Nelson's was a good one; but Pellew's was a better. The ships were in better order: and I don't think, since ships were built and admirals wore cocked-hats, a smarter officer ever trod a deck than Sir Edward Pellew. It's very little we did out there, but look at them; and they were quite satisfied at seeing us from their harbour. They never attempted to make a fight of it, although sometimes they might have eaten us. Out they would come, stand off-shore, looking as brave as a bull-dog; but directly Sir Edward got sail upon the

Caledonia, and the in-shore squadron edged down to smell their powder, it was tack ship, and in they went again. I think, in 1813, I remember counting over the low land by Cape Sepet twenty-two sail of the line, and amongst them six three-deckers, all a-taunto, with top-gallant yards across, ready for sea, colours flying; and yet they never exchanged a shot with any of us but once, and that was very much against their intentions.

“The Menelaus was always barking at them; but what could a frigate do? At last we thought we were in for a brush, and we got to quarters, intending to show them that, although they had killed one Nelson, yet another was alive. We had been kept so long without a real fight, that not half the men remembered how a shot whizzed.

“It was gunpowder-day (I never knew why it was called so, for we never had any great action that I heard of on the 5th of November), when the Frenchmen came out for an exercise. We were all of us well off the land, and therefore they got out into salt-water, in order to tack, and wear, and reef, and be sick. Out they came, all sail set. Any one would have supposed that they were going to see how many of us would look pretty in Toulon harbour; for they had got a fair wind back again from the east-south-east, and they showed their colours like good men and true. We were away to the southward, hardly in sight; but we soon knew what was going on, for our advanced squadron of four sail of the line made the signal that the enemy were coming out. We had had that so often that it made no stir amongst us, and the admiral never turned his hands up to make sail; but he quietly set his top-gallant sails and main sail, and the fleet followed the motion. Just at this time the wind suddenly chopped round to the south-west, and the French harbour was now to windward of their fleet. Directly this was seen, there was a stir to some purpose: the in-shore squadron cracked on, and we (for we kept the wind from the east-south-east) were not behind in making sail.

“It began to look pretty enough; for four of the French line were at some distance from the rest of their fleet, and our advance made a slap at them. In the mean time they

were working back as hard as they could, and we were coming up with a fair wind, and so it continued until we were within shot, when the wind headed us, and we paid off, and tried to pay them off too, for the *Caledonia* opened her broadside on a large three-decker.

“ The firing seemed to make us all jump sky-high, and we carried on in the hopes of a general action. Sir Edward Pellew had smelt the powder, and he was not going to give it up without trying its strength. But there was always some good luck for those Frenchmen. They had so much the advantage of flaws of wind, and were so well protected by the batteries, that although eleven shot struck the *Caledonia*, and she was close enough in-shore to have asked the officer of the battery to dinner, the fleet got in, and we went off. That was the only time Sir Edward got a shot at a three-decker. He got one broadside afterwards at an eighty-gun ship that we had managed in the *Boyne* to separate from the main body ; but she got into Toulon with only one or two shots in her side and eighteen in her stern.

“ This was our work,” Tom continued ; “ and between that and refitting at Mahon, and sometimes running over to Genoa, we got through the years until the peace came, and Bony was shoved ashore at Elba to get a good night’s sleep, and give us another chance of a penn’orth of steps at Portsmouth. But before we got to Old England again, we went down among the Barbary boys, and had the admiral’s flag on board of us. If they had not done just what the admiral liked, which was to pay us some dollars and send some slaves away, we should have made such a noise in the Bay of Algiers that fish would have been dear in the market. Well, that was done ; home we came ; and, as usual with all stationers, went to Portsmouth.

“ ‘ Well, Tom,’ said I to myself, ‘ here you are all safe after the war, with a grisly head and a petty officer’s rating ; you may now just ship a broom under your arm and sweep a crossing, or volunteer, and be refused by the captain of a collier. What am I to do,’ thinks I, ‘ on half-pay ? — nothing a day and feed yourself, won’t do. Although I’ve grumbled occasionally about a piece of pork being bad, and

the beer being made out of a salted horse ; yet I'm thinking that when the pay is gone, ship's allowance will be better than monkey's — more kicks than halfpence.'

" Well, I turned all this end for end in the cable-tier of my mind, and I did not like it. I was getting old in the service, but I had not a friend left in the world. I had been as often in action as any man in the fleet ; but what was that ? I had not a shot in my hull, and my spars were all safe and strong. I knew that if I went to volunteer for a ship on the peace establishment, the first lieutenant would have turned round upon his heel, never have looked at my certificates, but would say, ' Very likely, my fine fellow ; you may have been with Nelson, Collingwood, and Exmouth — (for they had made a Lord of Sir Edward Pellew) — but we want young, active men. Here, Mr. Jonas, see this old fellow out of the ship.' — Then, if I had gone to a West Indiaman, the skipper would have said, ' No, my lad, I can't take you. Men-of-war's men always want grog, and they don't like working all day and night.' In short, I began to think, that let a man serve his country as truly as he would serve himself — and I take that to be pretty staunchly — if he escape the shot of the French or the knife of the Spaniard, he may have all the pleasure of dying by starvation in the streets. What can an old sailor turn his hand to ?

" I had this before me. I was never an idler ; and although rather wild at Portsmouth, was tame aboard. We were to be paid off ; the pay-books were made up, and Tom Toprail likely to turn fisherman's boy in his old age, when one morning, just before we were to be sent adrift, whom should we see coming alongside but the admiral. He used to play these tricks in Port Mahon ; and no skipper knew that he might not be roused out of his cot at daylight to find the commander-in-chief looking on at the holy-stoning of the decks. Well, no sooner does his lordship come aboard, than the boatswain and his mates were at work to turn the hands up, and aft we all came on the quarter-deck. The officers were all in attendance, and we did not know if the gratings were going to be rigged, or the admiral going to preach.

“ ‘My lads,’ said he, ‘the fewer words I use, the better you will understand me. We have sailed together some time, and we are pretty well acquainted with one another. Here is a letter from the Admiralty, desiring me to fit out a squadron for very particular service in the Mediterranean, — that kind of service which you all like : in short, it is to attack Algiers. Now you all know you are ordered to be paid off : who amongst you will volunteer to serve under your old commander-in-chief, and enter on board the Queen Charlotte ?’

“ You know, Ben, when an admiral speaks, Jack is always silent ; and it’s a long time before he gets his jawing-tacks on board. Well, there was one fellow turning his hat round as if he expected to find Spanish dollars in the rim ; another was flattening his hair down and looking as if he was shipping the wiuch of his lungs to get a word up ; and a third was shuffling his feet about, as if he was getting ready to dance a hornpipe. Not a man, however, spoke a word, — they all stood, like a flock of sheep in a squall, huddled together.

“ ‘What ! not one ?’ said his lordship : ‘Is there not not a man in the Boyne who will sail with me ?’

“ ‘I’ll enter, my lord,’ said I ; ‘but I should like a day or two’s liberty to get rid of my money ; and then I’d go round the world with your lordship.’

“ ‘That’s well spoken, Toprail,’ said the admiral, for he was not the one to get on board a ship and not know his crew. ‘You shall have your present rating ; and I hope that in twenty-four hours you will have spent all you ought to spend, and appear on board the Queen Charlotte. — Is there no one else ?’

“ About a hundred spoke at once : it was all to the same end as my say. We wanted to hear old Scrapehard’s fiddle again, to have one good double-shuffle and cut, and take the sand off the lower-deck of our shoes ; to go to the theatre, and take Poll, and Susan, and Jane, and Betsy a cruise in a coach, and then we were ready for Turk, or Frenchman, or any other set of fellows in the world, whether they wore hats or turbans.

“ ‘Ah ! said his lordship, ‘I thought you only required

one to break the ice ; that 's all as it should be. You want a run on shore, and you shall have it : but remember, the good men who come first will have the best ratings. Pipe down, Mr. Calls.'

" The next day we were paid off, and the Israelites were on the look-out for us : but they were not half so bad as a new set of chaps, who had set up a kind of coast-guard on the grog-shops, as if we were smugglers, and wanted overhauling. They came on board first, about six of them, all dressed in black, calling themselves Methody parsons ; and, Lord love them, Ben ! what do you think they wanted ? — why, for us to hand over our pay to them, and to go to church instead of going to the Jolly Sailors. They turned up their sanctified eyes, and told us they had a regard for our souls ; and that the devil was a bad spirit, and was in the Jolly Sailors, and such places.

" ' I takes the liberty,' said Jack Henderson, ' to say to you that you don't speak Gospel. Man and boy, these last twenty years, whenever I've been at Portsmouth, I've gone at the Sailors ; and there 's not a drop of bad spirit in the house. And now, what have you got to say to that ?'

" ' My good man,' said one of them, ' if you give us your money, we will take care of it for you, keep you sober, save your soul, and make you a better man.'

" ' Well,' said Jack, ' that 's all fair for the payment, but come down below, for I don't want these chaps to see me strike my colours without firing a shot.' I knew Jack was up to some rig, so I claps myself on the combings of the main hatchway, and listened. Jack got the parson into the cockpit, and then asked him to go along the wings, as his chest was forward ; and away goes Jack straight a-head in the dark. He knew, and he saw—for he was used to the light below—that one of the gratings was up : in course, he jumps across to the other, and says he, ' Take care, your reverend worship, how you comes along. Take care of the hold, it's all clear as the boatswain's store-room.' Well, the poor fellow goes groping, and holding on by the knees, when he comes to the place where Jack had leaped over, and down he goes smack into the hold.

Jack hears the noise, and calls out, 'Where are you, your honour's worship's reverence?'

"'Oh, oh! I'm sorely bruised!' said the poor fellow: 'I have fallen into the pit.'

"'Why, I'm blessed,' said Jack, 'if his honour's reverence has n't tumbled down the hold! Oh, my eyes and limbs! how shall I got him out again? — there's not a rope in the ship, and we have no Jacob's ladder left!'

"'Jacob's ladder was a vision, a dream,' said the Methodist parson (for he was not hurt much, — more's the wonder; for if the devil had n't taken care of his own, he would have broken his neck). 'Oh, release me, my good man: — why did you deceive me?'

"'Did n't I tell you,' said Jack, 'to mind the hold, for it was as clear as the boatswain's storeroom? Now I won't deceive you this time, and you may get out how you can, for I'm blessed if I lend you a hand. If you can reach from the kelson to the lower part of the hatchway, you must be as long and as straight as old Domet, who used to stand on the break of the poop and whisper into the main-top. Good-by to your honour's worship's reverence! I'm off to the Jolly Sailors, and I'll just tell your brothers that you are in a sad state, and tumbled into the pit, as you call the hold, you lubberly rascal!'

"Up comes Jack, and he goes to another, who was preaching away by the hour; it was all about grog, and drunkenness; when Jack then whips his oar in.

"'Hulloa, old straight hair and black buttons! what's the use of your tossing up your eyes, like a dying cod-fish, about grog, when there's one of your crew so drunk that he's fallen down into the hold, and he's singing out like a good one just now — Listen, my old boy.'

"The parson clapped a stopper on his tongue, and whipped out the hawse plug of his ear, and sure enough he hears his friend down below roaring like a bull, and talking about ladders, and Jacob, and spirits. So what does he do but call the rest of them, and they got down below as far as they knew the way, and then perched themselves upon the combing like so many crows. Jack wanted to get some more into the scrape, but the poor

fellow below called out to them not to follow the deceiver ; upon which Jack tops his boom, jumps on deck, and getting his shipmates away, left the parsons to assist one another.

“ ‘ You ’re a pretty set of fellows to take care of sailors on shore, and can’t get out of the ship’s hold ! ’ said Jack. ‘ You ’re down in the spirit-room, old fellow, ’ he continued ; ‘ but all you drink won’t hurt your eyesight. ’ Away we all went, giving three cheers as we shoved off ; and we had a regular spree.

“ The admiral was quite right : in four-and-twenty hours I had n’t enough money to buy a quid of tobacco ; so I got a boat, and away I went on board the Queen Charlotte. In about three days I was amongst almost all my old shipmates.

“ Jack met the parson on shore, but he sheered off when Jack hailed him across the street and asked, ‘ If he was not a pretty considerable humbug of a parson to go aboard a ship and try to pocket the pay of the men, and then get drunk and fall down the hatchway ? ’

“ Well, I’ve often thought that that was the most impertinent thing I ever remember ;—to think that we lads who sailed round the world, knew every corner where a grog-shop stood, and thrashed every nation that ever wore a flag, should be treated like a set of dogs, and only given so many halfpence, for fear we should get sick in the bunshop. These Methody fellows caught some of the comical ; but they did n’t make much of a haul with us. Who knew if they were n’t lawyers under false colours ?—at any rate, the black flag was not likely to tempt us. I believe every one of them who are such sanctified fellows that they won’t let a sailor have a glass, and want to keep his money, are nothing more or less than a set of pirates ; and after they had plundered the ship, they would scuttle the hull, and send you to blazes in a moment. No, no ; let’s have it all in the regular way : the chaplain to preach, and the captain to read the articles of war ; give us our grog, and touch up the man who skulks ; then I’m much mistaken if we don’t beat all the world, as we have done before. To make sailors a tea-drinking set of Chinese, and to cram them with Methody, is altering the man as much as they altered the old ones when they cut off their tails ! ’

CHAPTER VI.

I know all about it, you see, for I was quartered on the poop at the signals. Well, down we runs; when the admiral, both ways bent for a belly-full, makes the general signal for dinner,—and many's the brave fellow that never poited another. But 't war no time to be nice in stowing away ground-tier grub—so you may suppose every man was at his gun in a crack.—*Naval Sketch-Book.*

'WE were not long in harbour. Directly it was known that we were going out to fight, and not to be stuck in Malta or Gibraltar, eating figs and exchanging biscuits for sausages, plenty of the right sort (men who had been half their lives working guns) volunteered. Before the 25th of July, on which day we left Portsmouth, five sail of the line, in which number were included the Queen Charlotte and the Impregnable, three frigates of the large sort, and two of the small ones, five gun-brigs, and four bomb-vessels, were manned and ready for sea. There was no necessity, Ben, for the press-gang. I never saw men come on board more determined to have prize-money: some of them, to be sure, had already been in action on shore, and mustered the first Sunday with a dark dab about both eyes; but they left their pay and their prize-money behind them. I'm told that half the captains and lieutenants in the Navy volunteered, and that you might have manned a frigate with officers; they could n't go in only five large ships, unless they went as captains of the guns.

"On the 28th we started from Plymouth and stood down the Channel; and from that time when we fished the anchor, until we anchored at Algiers, we had not many hours to look after our clothes-bags. There we were, directly we had swallowed our cocoa, hard at practice with the guns. There was a twelve-pounder cast adrift on the quarter-deck, and a large target stuck from the fore-top-mast studding boom, and we had to blaze away at that. Of course, when the ship rolled the target rolled; and for a week I would have bet my half allowance of grog against a marine's powder belt, that the target was as safe as a man in irons.

" At last Joe Miller hit it. I think he shut his eyes when he fired ; but he was patted on the back, and they gave him a glass of grog. When the other first and second captains of the guns saw that, if they made a hole in the rope yarns, it let rum out of the bottle, they began to be more cautious, and before we got to Gibraltar, I would n't have swung in the target for all the prize-money of the galleons. I've seen fourteen bottles broke in the course of the morning's exercise — and the bottle was the bull's-eye. It was as much as to say, ' Smash me, and the liquor will run out.' Besides this regular noise, we had two days in the week to blaze away powder ; and I'm sure that the Dey of Algiers, as they call the great Turk there, must have known exactly how far off we were, from the difference of the sound.

" Well, Ben, after making as much sail as the ships could carry, and after blazing away as much powder as would have served for the battle of St. Vincent, we came in sight of the rock, and dropped our anchors. Lots of rock scorpions were alongside in a moment, and we had a blow-out of grapes for a piastre, enough for twelve in a mess. But we were not to eat and do nothing ; we had to complete the water and provisions, and we made up our powder — for stone walls take a deal of battering, and we had seen the batteries before, and knew that it would be hot work and no favour. There were five frigates and a corvette, all Dutchmen, under an Admiral Mynbeer Capellan, who joined our squadron ; and those lads talked of nothing but schnaps and Turks from the time we anchored until we sailed.

" On the 14th we sailed, Dutchmen in co., and in right good order they were. They did not look quite so light aloft as we did, and when we came to reef topsails, ours were generally at the mast-head before they had got the weather earring out, or a point tied ; but they stuck close to us, and from the exercise they were at, you would have thought old Van Tromp had jumped up again, and was going to work after his old fashion.

" On the 16th the Prometheus joined the fleet. She was come straight from Algiers, and although it was not

often in men-of-war's boats that any of the men came on board an admiral's ship, yet the midshipman who came with Captain Dashwood just jumped up for a minute and then jumped down in the cockpit, and then up jumps the stroke-oar's man, and we began to pick his brains for knowledge, and his memory for news.

" 'Sharp work, lads, we shall have of it,' says he. 'Every blessed morning, noon, and night, are the donkeys and the slaves carrying sand to make batteries; and they walk guns about as easily as we used to carry a coil of rope in Portsmouth dock-yard, when the officer of the party, and Whistle, the boatswain, did not like it to be rolled. They know we are coming; they march the men into the batteries every morning, and there you see rammers and sponges turning about like a chap with two swords for a dog-vane. For the last twenty-four hours, we never met a Turk who was not loading his pistols, or looking into the barrels: and the other day, when we tried to get off the consul's family, having clapped a midshipman's rigging over their mast-heads, notwithstanding they were rather bluff about the bows — (at least the wife and the grown daughter), — yet those Turks were so hard at work getting ready for action, that they let them pass the gate, and did not know a woman from a man. I'm blessed if I did n't think that if any born creature ought to know a man from a woman, a Turk was the fellow! and yet they looked in their faces and let them pass.'

" 'Prometheus' boat!' said the mid of the deck; but it was only to get ready, so on went the coxswain with his story.

" Our doctor was on shore to rig them out, and it was managed right well. All the corkscrew locks were shoved under the hat, and they looked so like officers, that nobody had got the chair ready to hoist them in. Well, when the surgeon had got the mother and daughter in breeches, he gives the child, quite an infant, something to set it to sleep. He then claps it into a basket like you would a pig, and covers it up carefully, leaving the poor creature as much air as could come through the grating-work of the basket. Over all, he clapped some fruit, and

walks down with it towards the boat, whistling 'Oh the roast beef of Old England,' and swinging the basket about like you would a cock to set it to sleep. You know, lads, the streets of Algiers are so narrow, that when a donkey with a cargo of sand comes sailing along, you must screw up against the house and make yourself as flat as a pancake, or you might lose your storeroom altogether. If seven or eight of them come along, like a flock of wild geese, one after the other, the stopping of the first at the gate, to see what he is laden with, brings all the rest in a heap, and Turk or Christian could n't get by. Well, it so happened that, what between a heap of donkeys, and the beating them, and the slaves who were endeavouring to pass, the doctor got jammed against the wall by a jackass. He did not care a straw about himself, because he knew he could set his victualling department right when he got on board; but the basket was another affair, and he kept it down under the donkey's belly, swinging it about as much as he could, and whistling the 'Roast Beef' in sharp notes, whenever the animal gave him a jam, and sent the wind out of him. The Turks were laughing at the doctor, and spitting at him for a Christian; but he did not care much about that, and when they found he took it so quietly, they thought they would jam him more tightly against the wall, and make him stick there for a full due. So what does one of the Turks do, but out sword and give the donkey a touch in the stern that would have made even a pig forge ahead. Down went neddy's head, and up went his tail, and he began pitching about like a ten-gun brig in a head sea, working the doctor into the wall: when smack came a stick upon his crupper. He forged ahead fast enough then, and his hind legs gave the basket such a jog that the baby awoke, and set up a cry that might have been heard at the palace.

" 'They seized the doctor and child instantly, and I had just time to get down to the boat and shove off with the mother and daughter. They might have found out then that they were women, for they piped their eyes and swabbed their faces, and called out for the boy and the basket. The devil a word, however, did they say about

either the fruit or the doctor, who by this time, I should think, is about getting back to his own shape again. Well, lads, what do you think the Dey does? He sends for the child, and it was a toss up if he roasted and eat it, or pitched it into the harbour. However, something went right at that time, and he sent the child on board; but he has kept the doctor, the consul, and every body else he could find ashore. Lord have mercy upon them all! I would n't be in their clothes for all the shag-tobacco in Virginia! — You could n't give a chap a drop of water, could you? — but perhaps your grog has been served out."

"I took the hint, Ben; but before I could wet his throat, down came the captain, the boat was off, and we under sail.

"On the 26th we made the land, and then we began to look about us in earnest. The admiral had made up his mind not to stand shilly-shallying, and sending messages and getting no answers; for Turks are never in a hurry to talk, and when they have to write an answer, they take care to have time enough to mend their pens. As there was no secret in the matter, we all knew what we were going about just as well as the admiral. At daylight, on the morning of the 27th, when I came to relieve the quarter-master of the middle watch, there was the place in sight, and looking for all the world like a large main-topsail spread out to dry on the side of a hill; narrow towards the head and broad at the foot; the reef-points standing for streets; whilst the walls, which we could see as plainly as we could see the lighthouse, looked like the leach-ropes. It appeared nothing else, Ben, but fortification and big guns! batteries south of the town, batteries north of the town, batteries over the town, and batteries under it. And then comes the pier and Mole-head, which must have taken all the donkeys between Tetuan and Tunis to have carried the stone-work alone to have built them. We lay almost becalmed, with our heads towards the place; and as we looked through the haze of the morning, the town appeared larger, and the batteries bigger, than perhaps they really were. When I looked

round at the squadron going to attack it, I thought that we must be blown out of the water, and that if any of us came down again with our arms and limbs, we should be jammed into our right shapes again by a donkey in the gateway.

"I had been on shore often before at Algiers, and I knew the place as well as if I had carried the stones to build it; for when I was there in the Boyne, getting water, I got leave from the midshipman, after the hose was fixed and the water running, just to step through the gate and see what it was like. Well, there I saw houses jammed together, built of stone, with walls so thick, that I thought one could make a defence for the other, and that nothing could hurt the second street after the first one was knocked down. Then I got into the Fish market, where was a battery, which if well managed, was strong enough to sink a three-decker. When I walked round the Mole, I said to myself, 'I should like to see all the ships in the world come alongside of this, and let me have only three hundred blue jackets, and the guns fitted with tackles,' (for I don't understand that handspiking them out, when one good haul, and out it would run to the wall). Many's the time I looked into the coffee-shop and saw these chaps sitting cross-legged like tailors, with more pistols and swords than ever were used to cut out the Hermione; and then I used to imagine that these Turks thought of nothing but smoking and fighting. They were a fine stout set of fellows, and did not care for death any more than they did for their law against drinking grog. I've seen them turn it down by quarts, and well they may. Did any man yet have a thing denied him and not wish for it? When there's no liberty to go on shore, don't we all wish to go directly? whereas, had the word been passed 'for those who wanted liberty to go on shore, to go aft on the quarter-deck and put their names down,' not thirty would have gone. I heard the parson say, also, one morning, when somebody had eaten his hot roll, that, 'like Adam with an apple, the roll never would have been touched if it had not been the property of another.' But this is all human nature. Fancy how we boys longed for soft-tack when

the first lieutenant would not let the bum-boat come alongside: stop a man's grog, and he'll get drunk if he can.

"The time was near at hand when many a brave fellow who was then asleep in his hammock would be lashed up in it before the morrow, or launched overboard without it. Yet how quietly they slept! — many of them dreaming of home and their wives and their children, and such like encumbrance, which, by the blessed aid of the soldier, I have been spared. It was a beautiful morning, and there was a stillness about us like the calm before the hurricane. There was the Impregnable, as steady as if she had been built out of the sea! her sails were hanging dead down from the yards: not a breath of wind blew even the jib out for a second. On board of her all seemed as quiet below as the wind aloft, yet before night two hundred of her crew were either dead or wounded! Now and then one or two gulls would come screaming up towards the ship to pick up what had been thrown overboard; and then one might hear a pipe on board of one of the ships, just to break the silence. Somehow I felt quite happy when we began to slush the water about the decks, and I never liked the noise of a holy-stone so much as I did on that morning.

"The admiral was up early, and he sent away a boat with a flag of truce; but he knew well enough he would get a Turk's answer, — which means, Ben, that the Great Turk would *think* about it; and that's as much as to say, Don't bother us, we want coffee and pipes. Well, I watched the admiral, — for I have seen many of them when going into action. I had a good look at Collingwood at Trafalgar, as he walked the deck as quietly as a marine officer on a Sunday morning when he is full tog for muster. I saw Nelson at St. Vincent: he was not an admiral then, but his arms worked about just as much as the stump did afterwards: and I saw Exmouth before and during the battle of Algiers: he seemed more thoughtful than any of them; and well he might be, for there was he with five ships, which were likely to be riddled before they anchored, or which might be so disabled as not to get to the stations which had been chalked out for them. Even if we did get all right, anchor

down and sails stopped aloft, who could look at those stone walls, and know how thick they were, and yet feel confident of success? He who commanded us all, and who gave the word to fire, how could he look on at the double row of iron teeth peeping out bravely from the portholes of the batteries, and not think that, close as we were to be, not one of them could be fired without carrying some execution along with it? He was thoughtful; and as he stood upon the poop overhauling the town through his glass, I thought to myself, 'I'm blessed if I would not sooner be Tom Top-rail, and have only to look after No. One, than be Lord Exmouth, with all the fleet upon his mind!' One dwells on these things afterwards; but certain it was he thought, when he first volunteered for the business, that many a hat would be without a head, and for that reason he would not take one of his own family. They came crowding all sail to get a chance of being shot,—for there's not a finer, braver set of men in the service than belong to that name. He was right. 'No! no!' said he, 'I have quite enough upon my hands and head, without having the anxiety of a son with me.'

"The Severn had got a slight cat's paw of wind, and she towed the flag of truce some distance; but the wind deserting her, the boat shoved off, and a long hot pull they had of it. We watched her as she came to a grapnel outside of the Mole, and waited for an answer to the letter, which a Turkish officer had carried on shore.

"The breeze came down about two bells in the forenoon watch, and by the time we had got our pork and pease-soup stowed away, we were close to the land, and hove-to near enough to see the heads of the Turks' pipes. There they were by thousands, Ben, sitting crossed-legs, with a lap full of arms and a mouth full of smoke, looking at us just as quietly as if we were some show got up by the Dey for the amusement of his subjects. But we soon altered the show 'Well,' thinks I to myself, although I said it out loud to Tom Simpson the signal-man, 'this is a pretty go! This is what it is to be a Turk! For do you mind, Tom,' said I, 'these here fellows who clap canvass on their skulls because they've no hair, think that all the shot that ever was

blazed since Adam was an oakum-boy in Chatham dock-yard would never hit them unless they were wanted aloft ! If they are killed, why it's all right ! if they escape, it was all arranged it was to be so ! And certain they feel, that if it's their time to answer muster to the general roll, although we may be bunglers enough to miss them, yet that some tile would tumble upon their skulls, or some powder blow up, or some catamaran capsize, for, somehow or other, they were to go, and go they would ! I wish I could think so,' I continued to Simpson, 'for my legs itch very much.'

" 'What !' said Simpson, 'not to run away, Tom ?'

" 'No, no !' said I. 'Did Tom Toprail ever bob his head to a two-and-thirty pounder yet ? Handle your purser's pump and look out, for here's the boat coming back.'

" It was a little after four bells P.M., as they write it on the log-board,—and which means, Ben, I believe, 'provisions munched,' as it begins after dinner,—that we saw the boat returning, and, as the admiral thought beforehand, without any answer. Up goes the signal, 'Are you ready ?' and it was a hard matter to say what ship answered first. The stops seemed to break all at the same moment, excepting on board the *Superb*, and the signal-man there was determined not to be last, so he sent the flag aloft without any stop at all.

" 'Put the helm up, Mr. Gaze,' said the admiral : and Mr. Gaze, who was the master, called out as quietly as if he was going to wear ship at sea, 'Up helm, quarter-master !' — 'Ay, ay, sir !' said I, and round flew the spokes.

" The sails were trimmed, and each ship steered for her station. I was at the weather wheel ; and although I did think a bit, yet I never took my eye off the lighthouse, which Mr. Gaze told me to keep in a line with a flag-staff. 'Yes,' said I to myself, 'here we go, right before the wind on a lee shore, to see which is hardest, iron or stone, into a place not large enough to swing a decent-sized bum-boat ; and if we are to get out again, we must haul her over the Mole-head ;—for the breadth across was not more than three

hundred and fifty feet, and how the devil were we to work a three-decker out of that horse-pond?"

" 'Starboard a little, Toprail!' said the master.

" 'Starboard it is, sir,' said I.

" 'We must anchor by the stern, Gaze,' said the admiral.

" 'Certainly, my lord!' said the master; not looking round the devil a point; but continuing, 'Steady-i-e!'

" 'Steady it is, sir!' said I.

"The wind was light, and we slipped along gently through the water. All hands were at quarters: the sail-trimmers stood ready to shorten sail, whilst the men on the lower deck were to attend to the cables. Well, Ben, as we got closer and closer, I expected a Turkish salute, for now the Mole-head seemed coming on board of us. But no, there they were, sitting as I told you before, and not a blessed one of them was afraid of the flying jib-boom shoving them off the battery!

" 'Shorten sail, Brisbane!' said the admiral, and every thing was clewed up, and we went gently to our station.

" 'Let go the anchor, Gaze!' said his lordship.

" 'Hold on for a moment!' said the master with a louder voice. 'My lord, we must go a *little* farther in; — now I think we are about right to rake the Mole-head!' Down went the anchor from the stern, a hawser was run out to a brig, and the jolly old Queen Charlotte lay like a duck on the water, with her starboard broadside ready to light the Turks' pipes. I lashed the wheel, and jumped upon the poop to assist Simpson if any signals were to be made. 'If those Turks,' says I, 'understand English, they must think it odd that we come poking in here, right under their guns, and calling out the soundings as if we were going into one of our own harbours.' Well, by way of letting them believe their ears if they doubted their eyes, we waited until we were all stoppered and snug, and then we gave them three such cheers as made the whole batch of them take their pipes out of their mouths, and they sent the smoke after the mouth-piece as coolly as I should have done at the Jolly Sailors.

"The admiral seemed to know what answer we should

get to the cheer ; and as he did not want to hurt the smokers, he waved his hat, for he was on the poop, to the Turks, and kept saying, ' Get out of the way, will you ? I'm going to fire ! ' But they looked at him with as much composure as a boatswain's mate looks at a man lashed to the gratings. ' Stupid fellows ! ' said the admiral, ' *will* you get out of the way ? ' He kept waving his hat with as large a sweep as a chap makes when he is mowing the governor's grass.

" Just at this time, when the *Leander* was the only ship which had taken up her position besides ourselves, the silence was disturbed by a shot from the Lighthouse battery, which came smack in amongst us.

" ' Stand by ! ' said the admiral. Two or three more followed the first ; and as the fight was fairly begun by the Turks, he called out, after again waving to the people, who were close to the muzzles of the guns, ' *Fire !* ' The whole broadside was blazed at the word, and no man was left on that pier-head who had not his pipe put out. Close as we were, I could see distinctly the effect of our shot. The top of the *Mole-head* seemed almost smashed ; but the smoke (for all the batteries opened their fire) soon clapped a stopper upon all observations in that quarter.

" The *Superb* was the next ship to us, and she got all snug without much damage. The *Minden* was next to her ; then came the *Albion*, and last of all the *Impregnable*. These four line-of-battle ships were with their broadsides to the broadside of the *Mole-battery* ; whilst the *Severn* and the *Glasgow* were on our larboard quarter, astern of the *Leander*, which ship was abreast of the *Fish-market*, — for of course the Turks did not want any fish that day — they had to look out for their own souls !

" I suppose, Ben, ever since *Trafalgar*, there never was so much noise made about a parcel of Turks. We saw them driven into the batteries like a set of donkeys ; and no sooner had a whole batch of them been blown to *Jericho*, than in comes a new set to fill up their places. In the mean time we were not left to look at them in comfort. The whole contents of the inner part of the harbour seemed determined to have a crack at the admiral ; and once or

twice I wished he had walked a little farther away from me. Every now and then we heard the bomb-vessels blazing away, and we saw the shells fall into the town and batteries, as exactly as a boy pitches a stone in a hat.

"In the middle of all this smoke and noise, there was Mynheer Capellan coming into action with his frigates, and ranging up to his station, to the southward of the town, in a style which made the admiral say, 'Well done, Capellan! Ah! that's a brave nation, and right well do they uphold the character of their country!' The Turks blazed away at them, for now they found out what asses they had been to let us anchor without annoyance; but Mynheer and his broad-sterned crew took it all in good part until they anchored, and then they set to work to clear off the score; and never yet did they stand to their guns better and act more coolly than they did at Algiers.

"The Dutch admiral brought up astern of the Glasgow, and his squadron anchored astern of him. But of all the gallant sights that ever I saw, I never saw any thing to beat the courage and the coolness of Wise in the Granicus. The Hebrus and she were left to fill up any opening which might be made by some ship being unable, from the lightness of the wind, to reach her situation; and there he remained out of fire, until he saw all the horses in their proper stables, and now he was to do just as he liked. Well, he never looked any where else, but smack in the hottest of the fire. He was not going to tail an end with the Dutchmen, or get half out of range by boxing about the bomb-vessels, so he drops his courses, sets his top-gallant sails, and steers smack for the admiral's flag, which he saw above the smoke; for he knew we were the closest in, and had got the warmest berth. He shortened sail all at once, ranges up between the Queen Charlotte and the Superb, and sets to work to make himself equal to a line-of-battle ship by blazing away faster than any ship in the fleet.

"It has been the fashion ever since that business of the Seahorse and the Turkish frigates, to say, 'Oh! they are only Turks! what can they do?' But I'll tell you, Ben, what they tried to do. I'm blessed if they did n't try in a

parcel of crazy boats to board us in the smoke, and set fire to the *Leander* ! Now that business of *Hamilton's* and the *Hermione*, which is painted up in the Hall, was a great thing ; but what think you of a parcel of Turks (fellows in large trowsers and turbans, and who hardly know an oar from a neckcloth) pulling up, catching crabs every moment, to board a three-decker ? Why, I suppose such impertinence was never known ! We could have thrashed them with wet swabs, or left them to tumble overboard, by shutting the lower-deck ports and handing them some greasy ropes over the side. But to think even of such a thing ! Well, poor fellows ! they had not long to think what was coming next, for the *Leander* sent one broadside of round and grape in among them ; and then if any man had wanted to fish, he would have hooked a Turk. They would have bit, poor fellows ! at any bait ; and if I could have saved some of them, it's not Tom Toprail who would have seen such gallant fellows made food for fishes.

“ We soon finished the Mole-head battery, and sprang the ship round to touch up the Lighthouse-battery. Those gentlemen had got it all their own way ; for unless some stray shot from the *Impregnable*, or a shell or two from the bomb, gave them something to think of, they were amusing themselves with pelting away at us, as if we had been stuck in a pillory. We paid them off, however, and set them dancing about like a set of fellows at Portsdown fair. They never saw heads unshipped as we unshipped them. In half an hour the bottle-hitting had come into use, and they had not a gun left to blaze away at us.

“ Although from this time our share of the shot was but sparingly served out to us, yet the other ships were upon whole allowance, and the *Impregnable* got more than she wanted. She was, from her station, the last of the line-of-battle ships which came into action, and she took up her station in as pretty a fire as ever whistled round any ship. I've heard say, that by some accident she was exposed to a raking fire, and that her loss was the greatest during the time she endeavoured to get her broadside to the battery. But well did she repay the Turks when the opportunity offered. It was requisite, however, if possible,

to get some other ship to take a little of the fire from her, and the Glasgow tried to stand her friend ; but the wind had lulled altogether, and she could not reach the Impregnable. There we all were, becalmed, close under the batteries ; the powder growing short, and the men getting tired ; whilst the Turks (for they had forty thousand soldiers in the place) had always a fresh supply of hands - who, although they were driven into the batteries, fought like devils when they were there ; for they had no chance of escape but through their own exertions.

" The shot was like hail occasionally ; yet in the Queen Charlotte we had very few killed or wounded. We had knocked the batteries to atoms ; and now the admiral was for burning the fleet, or rather one or two ships which belonged to the Dey ; and which he, as he did not know the difference from a fleet or a squadron (and how should he ?) called by the name of a *fleet*. They were burnt by Mr Richards from our barge and we only lost two men in so doing. But a Mr. Pocock from the Hebrus, a gentleman who had been under Sir Peter Parker in the Menelaus in America, and who was a regular devil-me-care man as far as shot and shell were concerned, pushed alongside in a rocket-boat ; the Turks made a desperate attack upon him, and he and nine of his crew were killed in a minute. The boat came out with only three men left in it, and these three were half inclined to try it again ; but we were devilish glad there was no occasion for her going back. The whole batch of the Turks were burning, and one drifted out so near us that I thought my whiskers were a-fire.

" Well, I need scarcely tell you, that the business was settled to a certainty ; the ships were destroyed, the batteries beaten in, and the town shaken ; but when night closed in, there we remained without a breath of wind to blow us clear of the harbour. If the calm had continued, why, between you and me, considering the magazines on board the different ships were getting so empty that the pursers' stewards might have turned them into candle-boxes without any fear of their blowing up, I'm thinking that we might have carried sand, as well as the donkeys, to

repair our own work ! When the sun went down and it began to be dark, I can't say that I felt so easy as I could have wished. I thought I should have been a slave, for I could not shut my eyes to the danger.

" The admiral had been wounded and had gone below ; when his crew saw that his wound was not serious, they gave three cheers. We had already swang the ship's head round to seaward ; but the devil a flaw of wind by two bells had come towards us. The flag the mast-head was hanging upright and downright like a jackass's fore-leg ; and although I kept my eyes aloft like a Methody parson at prayers, yet I could not see it move. We ran out hawsers and got boats to tow ; and about four bells a light air springing up from off the land, we dropped our canvass, and were standing out. Well then, I felt as a man should feel who had been in such a business — blazing away from four bells in the afternoon to four bells in the first watch. I had left the poop and got to the wheel, cast off the twiddling-lines, and clapped my hands on the spokes, having given it a bit of a twist to find out if all was right astern of us.

" Although we had given up firing, the Turks had not. The batteries along the Mole could only find work for the stone-masons ; but one or two forts over the town, and which if we had blazed at until now we never could have struck, continued to play upon us. The hawsers were cut and the tow-ropes smashed ; but as we had just steerage-way from the breeze, it did not much signify. We were creeping out, and the rest of the fleet were getting under weigh as fast as they could. The master called out, ' Port a little, Toprail ! ' I heard it, Ben, but I could n't answer. A shot had come through the quarter-deck port from that cursed battery I told you of, and both my pins were shot off below the knee. Mr. Gaze not hearing the answer, stepped to the wheel, and I should have been dead enough if he had not called a couple of stout hands and sent me below. I saw no more of the action ; but I heard the thunder roll over our heads, for it came on to rain and thunder and lightning. I heard the cables as they ran through the hawse-holes, and before eight bells had struck

and the watch were relieved, I was in my hammock, short of both legs. I had gone through all the business of docking, without once singing out to the doctor 'to hold his hand.'

"Well, you know the rest. The Dey had had quite enough of that day; and, although he might have known that powder could not last for ever, unless they could get the saltpetre out of the salt-water (and you know going to sea they hoist the blue peter), yet he was such an ass as to come to the terms we sent in by the flag of truce: whereas, had he sent back his compliments to know if he could assist the admiral in repairing his ships for him to sail back again, not all the Exmouths, or Collingwoods, or Nelsons, that ever commanded a fleet, could have forced him to beg pardon for his impudence. We could n't have returned to the fight. I tell you, some of the ships had already taken the powder out of the brigs; and the batteries on the hills, which had never heard the whiz of a shot or the burst of a shell, might have fired away at us until another fleet came from Spithead.

"It was a great action! a noble action! a daring action! but it was a lucky action; and as they say fortune favours the brave, so it favoured the admiral.

"My service to you, Ben, said Tom, as he took off his hat and made me a low bow; our logs are run up, and the glass is turned, I hope, for a long run."

CHAPTER VII.

Even when my time comes, ne'er believe me so soft,
As with grief to be taken aback:
That same little cherub that sits up aloft
Will look out a good berth for poor Jack! — DRYDEN.

I NEVER looked at old Tom without thinking, that although Greenwich was a long reach in a seaman's life, yet it was a very snug mooring when once we had got the

bridles in. Now the gales of wind which whistled over our heads might sing and howl, the rain might patter against the windows — frost and snow, or winter or summer, might come all of a heap, yet Tom and I, after all our hardships and dangers, might lay our heads on our pillows in security, and reap the fruits of our services.

That battle of Algiers was most glorious, and would convince all seamen, that Lord Exmouth knew the value of a ship's broadside as well as any man afloat. He might have had more ships if he had asked for them ; but he calculated exactly (perhaps rather too closely) the force which was requisite. But there are no fools like Turks ! To let the fleet take up its position ! why, they must have known that English sailors would not turn back for a shot or two ; and secondly, that once well within point-blank shot, they could not turn back, if they were so inclined, without exposing themselves to a killing fire ; so that they might as well have waited until the flag-ship got near the Mole, and then have opened every gun upon her. The firing would have put down the wind ! the other ships would have drifted in under a blaze of great guns, raking them fore and aft, and have had to take up their positions under every disadvantage. And then the following day to come to terms, must have been a very agreeable surprise ! No man ever led more gallant officers and seamen into battle than Lord Exmouth did ; no man ever fought a harder action, or more richly deserved what he obtained. But, Lord bless their rum-covered Turkish heads ! — the French were not quite so civil either at the Nile or Trafalgar, and the Danes at Copenhagen never threw a chance away.

Tom and I had seen more service than any two in Greenwich. Most of my old shipmates in the *Agamemnon* were dead and buried, and we were the regular yarn-spinners of the Hospital ; but as year after year crept on, we began to look at each other as if before long we should part company. Occasionally I received some money from Jane ; at least I suppose it came from her, for I had lost sight of the other lady, and believed that she was on the foreign cruise.

We had nothing to set us on the talking tack until the

battle of Navarino, and we used to laugh heartily at that. To think of three fleets of different nations setting to work seriously to sink a parcel of Turkish ships, when half their crews and their admirals were on shore smoking their pipes. It was no doubt a great victory either for the French or the Russians; but for the English, it must have been mere child's play! I know we always treated it as such. Tom used to say, "It was just like those fools, who thought, if they were to be killed, they would be killed; so some went on shore to smoke, whilst the others remained to be shot!"

At last, at the beginning of 1835, my old friend Tom began to give way in right earnest. He seemed to walk with great difficulty, and I thought that the March gales would make him clew every thing up and lay him on his beam-ends. But he had his wits about him; and in February he began to think that Jorum's allowance grew less, and that the old red-nosed landlord thought it no longer a joke to bouse up Tom's jib every Saturday night and get nothing for it but the battle of Algiers, which, in spite of Tom's alterations, was very much like the old story, which Jorum by that time knew by heart, and could tell quite as well as my old shipmate.

"Well, Ben," said Tom to me, "I intend to square the yards with that old quart-pot to-day, and then I shall be ready to trip my anchor without any load upon the flukes."

"How do you intend to do that, Tom?" said I; "for the score is heavy, and your tobacco-money has all gone in smoke."

"I have n't furled sails altogether yet," said Tom, "although I may have taken a reef in my brain; and, Ben," said he, "you must come to the Dolphin to-night and be a witness to the payment; because, you see, I intend to leave you to look after my traps when I brace about my head-yards for a full due. So, mind the signal! Rendezvous, Ben, at the Dolphin to-night at four o'clock!" And away he went hobbling along, and not exactly making his marks in the mud as straight as a farmer when he plants beans.

The time came, I was there, and Tom at anchor in a dry dock. Jorum did not open the gates to float the hull

although it was Saturday night, which was the night agreed upon by the old host for returning some of the money in kind which had fallen from Tom's pockets during his dancing days at Plymouth.

"I say, Jorum," said Tom, "did I ever tell you a yarn about Algiers?"

"Oh!" said Jorum, twisting round like a pig in a squall, or like a monkey in chase of his own tail, "did you ever tell me of any thing else? I'm blessed if I don't know every man's name from Exmouth's to Pocock's, and from Milne to Millar. I begin to think, Mr. Toprail, that you must be Joe Miller yourself!"

"Well, don't be surly, old fellow! We are all winding-up fast, and some of us may not weather the March gales! Come, give us a drop, and I'll tell you about Napier's business with the Portuguese."

"I don't want to hear any thing about Napier and his Portuguese! I've read it all in the papers! You talk of a *drop* — hang me if I don't think you would drink a cask full! and as for a barrel, I should be sorry to see that at your lips!"

"Ay," said Tom, "breakers ahead is a sign of shoal water! You don't want me to run on the bank and be high and dry!"

"Run on the bank?" said Jorum, who took this in another sense than Tom intended it. "No, I don't want that; we have had lots of those breakers already!"

"What day of the month is this, Jorum?" said Tom, apparently recollecting something.

"What game are you up to now?" said the landlord. "Why, it's the 14th of February."

"Give us your hand, Ben," said Tom; "eight-and-thirty years ago you and I were about something else than thinking of beer and pipes at this time!"

I gave Tom a hearty shake, and said I, "That's true, Tom; but after such a day's work, a drop then would not have been unwelcome."

"Why, what did you do eight-and-thirty years ago?" said Jorum, looking as knowing as a Johnny Crow at Jamaica.

"Give us your hand again, Ben," said Tom, not noticing the landlord's question at all. "When I think, that was the first action we were ever in together; for I was in the *Excellent* when she ranged up to take the fire off the *Captain*, when Nelson clapped his helm a-starboard and run alongside of the *San Nicholas*. My eyes, Ben! I can fancy you as proud as a dog with two tails, carrying the swords under your arm!"

"I say, Tom, did you ever hear my song about that business?" said I.

"No," said he.

"Will you hear it, old Jorum?" said I.

"Certainly," said he.

"Chorus," said I.

"Done," said he. "Come, Tom, take your beer: I wish it would put your pipe out."

"Now, Ben," said Tom, "never mind the smoke."

"On February the fourteenth, St. Vincent's Cape not very far,
We spied a noble Spanish fleet of twenty-seven men-of-war;
Ten frigates too we counted, and a brig they had moreover,
All under the command of one Don Josef de Cordova.

Hurrah! there they are, all with colours flying,
And Spanish ships and enemies — of that there's no denying.

"We had but sixteen ships with us, but all our hearts were firm
and good:

Old Jervis he commanded us, with Nelson, Troubridge, Collingwood;

With many other captains bold, resolved to fight the harder
When they saw the Spanish four-deck'd ship the *Santa Trinidad*.

Hurrah! here they are; how soon the guns will rattle!

Up goes a signal now — look out — 'Prepare for battle.'

"Brave Troubridge soon commenced the fight, cut through the
Spaniards' straggling line;

Then Nelson cheer'd — 'Hurrah!' said he, 'there's some of them
shall soon be mine.'

The *Victory* pour'd her broadside in; the Spaniards flinch'd the
fun through,

As the colours soon came tumbling down of the *Salvador da Mundo*.

Hurrah! there they are; blaze away my gallant boys!

Never mind your legs or arms, the grape shot or the noise.

“Brave Nelson in the Captain sought the largest ship of all the fleet;
 And how, my eye! the shot did fly, when these two vessels
 chanced to meet!
 The San Josef back'd her comrade up, with the Nicholas and
 Isidore;—
 The first she carried eighty guns, the latter had but seventy-four.
 Hurrah! here they are!—Boarders fore and aft, be ready:
 ‘Follow me,’ said Nelson, ‘Iads;’ and ‘Follow me,’ said
 Berry.

“He boarded the Saint Nicholas—in a minute she was captured
 then:
 The Holy Joe still blazed away, still ‘Follow me, my gallant
 men,
 Forward! forward!’ Nelson cried; ‘my noble captains, stick to
 me,
 And Nelson bridge shall bear us on to Westminster or Victory!’
 Hurrah! here we are; the admiral is dead below,
 We’ve captured a good pair of them—the Nicholas and
 Holy Joe.

“The fight is done, the battle won, and Jervis is victorious;
 The British flag still waves aloft, as proud as it is glorious;
 And Nelson’s coxswain, here am I, who carried all the swords
 away,
 Shall find his name in every page that tells of this triumphant
 day.
 Hurrah! here we are, jolly dogs and gallant tars,
 Safe from shot, from gales of wind, from battles and from
 wars.”

By this time Jorum had come to an anchor, and seeing me
 blaze up a bit upon the business, he said, “Tell us all about
 that, and Tom sha’n’t be high and dry, as he calls it, any
 longer.”

“Now, then,” says Tom, “three cheers for this fight!”
 and he manages to get upon the table. “Now then another
 drop, and hurrah for St. Vincent and Ben Brace! One—
 two—three—hurrah!” said old Tom, and he swung his
 arm round, with his crutch flourishing over our heads; but
 at the last cheer he gaye himself too much twisting way,
 and he fell down upon the table with a most confounded
 crash. As he moved neither tack nor sheet, I began to
 fear that his anchor of life had parted company.

"Cheer up, Tom!" said I; "cheer up! don't die in a public-house amongst beer-barrels and tobacco-pipes! Hold on until I get you inside the gates; and then, if you slip your wind, why, you do it amongst seamen!" Tom had fallen on his face, and I slewed him round, clapping his cocked-hat under his head: he looked dreadfully pale; his lips were half open, and he breathed very faintly.

"He's not dead, I hope," said Jorum, "or I shall have a coroner's 'quest here! Can't we get him to his own berth?"

"No! no!" said I; "to take him to his berth would be his death! We must keep him quiet and wet his lips with brandy. If that won't give him a little life, why, I would not give much for his spirit? Here, old Tom," I continued, turning to my old messmate, "open your lips." Sure enough Tom did move them a little, and somehow the brandy ran down his throat all in the natural way.

"Oh! oh!" said Tom, "a little more, and I shall be better!"

"Lord!" said Jorum, "I thought he was going to say, 'if we gave him any more, we should kill him!'"

"Just the *reverse*!" said Tom faintly; "wet my lips, Ben — it will all be over soon — Oh, oh!"

At that moment the doctor of the Hospital rode by, and Jorum rushed out to tell him that one of the pensioners was dying inside.

I thought Tom's eye was more alive when he saw him come in; and that even a smile played upon his old countenance. The doctor felt his pulse. "I see," said Tom, "that it's thick and dry for weighing. My head-yards are braced abox, and they have got hold of my jib-hal-yards. But, Ben, my good old fellow, don't let me die upon this table, like a chap stretched out to lose his legs. I feel the beer and the smoke a-blowing up my magazine of life; my spirit-room's empty; I shall never hear the boatswain's mate's pipe; and when he turns the hands up, sha'n't answer my muster."

"Poor fellow!" said the doctor; "his pulse is very fluttering. How did this happen?"

Before I could say a word, Tom went on: —

"I'm getting under weigh fast, sir," said he, turning towards the doctor; "but I'm none so poor neither. I have steered through life like a seaman, and never been wrecked but once. I have been fore and aft the world, and seen every thing from a monkey to a monarch, but one thing; and, sir, may I make bold to ask you one favour?"

"What is it, my old fellow?" said the doctor; "any thing which I can do for you, I will with pleasure; but I think you had better keep a little quiet."

"No, no, sir! it won't do to lose time when the tide is setting against us; it only makes us pull the longer for no purpose. But this is it, sir; I've heard from Brace, that you cut his arm off, and likewise kept the ball which killed Nelson. Now, sir, before I fill and make sail, will you be so kind as to let me see it?"

"Certainly, my fine old fellow!" said the doctor, and he began to feel his pockets.

"Lift me up, lads!" said Tom!—"here, youngster," said he to a boy who was in the room, "lend us a back. There, that's your sort, handsomely, Ben, if you love me my back would never do for a cable, for they could n't get it into a bend." The boy got upon the table, and doubling himself up, put his back in such a position that I managed to place Tom nearly upright upon his stern-post, he leaning a little upon the boy.

"Here it is!" said the doctor, as he held it towards Tom.

"My eyes are precious dim, sir," said Tom, "as if I had been standing to windward in a heavy gale; but I think I do see it now, with some wire like round it."

"That is a part of the epaulette," said the doctor.

All hands had got close round Tom; and he said to Jorum as the landlord looked at it, "That's it, Jorum!—that's the ball which killed Nelson; look at it!"

"I see it plain enough, Tom," replied the landlord.

"Thank you, doctor," he continued, "thank you kindly. Might I have a glass of brandy before they try to move me? I should like one cheer more for Collingwood—one more glass."

"No, no, my good fellow," replied the doctor; "it would kill you! Come, Brace, take him to his cabin, and

I will come and see him there. Look sharp." Saying this, he left the room.

Tom shut his eyes, but continued,— "The log's marked up; the glass is nearly out, and I must call the man who is to relieve me."

"Cheer up! cheer up!" said I. "Get a shutter and a pillow, Jorum."

"None of your making an old woman of me, Ben!" said Tom in a firm voice. "Borrow a tarpaulin-hat, and stick my scraper on the top of it. My head has carried the hat long enough, and now it might as well carry the head;—tie for tie, you know, Ben, and no favour. But since my strength has begun to fail me, my eyes to get dim, and my allowance to puzzle me, I may as well be off. But I'll never haul down my ensign until the hull's sinking! Now then, Ben, heave and a weigh!"

"Now, lads," said I, "let's lift him steadily."

"Where's the doctor, Ben?" said Tom.

"Gone long ago," said I.

"Oh! is he?" said Tom: "then put me down, and I'll walk home, if it's all the same to you;—I thought he was alongside of us. Here, Jorum," said Tom, as we placed him upright upon his pins; "you and I are quits!"

"Not exactly," said Jorum; "the score's high!"

"Yes, but an agreement is an agreement all over the world! It is fifteen years ago now since you agreed to clear off my score if I showed you the ball that killed Nelson. Ben's a witness; so many thanks to you, and a good night! I watched every day when the doctor came home on his pony, and as the chalks were many, and it was a weight upon my conscience, I thought if I could sham a die in your house, I might get the doctor here. I heard the trot of the animal before I gave the cheers; you know the rest; and now I'll go and pitch the medicine out of the window, sleep like a top, and be out of debt to-night and danger to-morrow."

"Well!" said I, "man and boy have I lived for the last seventy years, and had lots of greenhorns in *lines*, yet I never should have thought of such a trick as this. A boy might have done it; but for you, Tom, to set about

it — to clap on such a face and spin such a yarn ! I should just as soon have thought of seeing the Grand Turk turn governor of Greenwich. I wonder where your wit will cease, Tom ? ”

“ Why nobody gives up his fun until he is obliged,” said Tom. “ So now I ’ll go to bed. Come along, Ben ; I ’ll get you to pull off my legs, for my back is stiff from the fall.—Good night, Jorum ! Lord love you ! if you get to windward of Tom Toprail, you have only one more to weather ! And now the heavy ballast which almost foundered me being pitched overboard, I can hold on a little longer, and pay and go, like a hawser from a boat.”

I got Tom to bed : he was rather giddy, but the next morning was somewhat better. What with the fall, however, and the quantity he drank, Tom was not likely to see the next Christmas-day. He was aware of this ; and having heard that people settled their worldly concerns before they tripped their last anchors, he sent for me. “ Ben,” said he, “ I should like to make my testament into a will, as they call it ; and as you learnt to write, and moreover are a scholar, perhaps you ’ll set to work and chalk it out. But I ’ll tell you what to write ; because I ’m given to understand that it must be a man’s own wishes, and that it will be attended to by the King and the governor of the Hospital. So bring yourself to an anchor, and write as I tell you.

“ ‘ I, Tom Toprail, having weathered many a gale, been in many an action, whistled for many a wind, and having lost both legs, do now dispose of my hull and rigging, stores and ammunition, cargo and cot-clews ; and hope my soul will have a safe voyage to the harbour of eternity, with a steady breeze and a smooth sea.

“ ‘ If it ’s quite agreeable to the governor and first lord of the admiralty, I should like to be fitted out in a hammock instead of a coffin. As for *shrouds*, which I understand are placed over the hull for survey when the masts are gone, I leave that for Ben Brace to look after, and hope he will see me properly stowed away.’ ”

“ Ben, that ’s only what we always did one for another : and if you don’t launch me over the standing part of the

fore-sheet, you can lend a hand to take the moorings in, and see me lashed up for a full due. But let's get on with my testament.

" ' I leave it as my will, that a pair of white duck trowsers, long in the legs and tight over the hips, may, with a pair of new wooden pins, checked shirt, black neckerchief, a round jacket with bright buttons, and a regular neat-cut, low-crowned tarpaulin-hat, with a broad ribbon, and ' Royal Sovereign ' upon it, be all lashed up with me in the head-clew of my hammock. For, although I have great respect for the Greenwich regulation-cut toggery, yet I would rather answer my muster in the dress I served in, for I don't think my own legs would feel comfortable in blue stockings.

" ' Whatever part of my hull the doctor may think proper to dock, of course must undergo repairs ; but I beg he won't dock my tail ; which Ben will see properly parcelled and stowed away. But, as the parson says, we shall be mustered with all our limbs, I hope a pair of white stockings, and a pair of shoes with large ties, and made long in the quarters, and sharp-pointed, will be clapped in with the rest of the gear ; for if my legs are to be re-shipped, I should n't like to muster barefooted, like an Irish waister in a line-of-battle ship.

" ' I give my best thanks to the governor, the parson, and Sir William Beattie ; and my tobacco-box, with all the pig-tail, shag, or Virginia he can find in my cabin, to Ben Brace ; and when he dies, which of course can't be far off, he may give my box with the Royal Sovereign on it to the oldest seaman in the Hospital ; and so to continue as the property of the oldest pensioner alive — and I hope he may have tobacco to *smoke* until the last *pipe*.

" ' I give my pictures of St. Vincent, Trafalgar, and Algiers, to Jorum ; he may have also the Santissima Trinidad, to be stuck up in the room where the doctor cleared my account. My medals for Trafalgar and Algiers I give to myself ; and I'm to be buried with them sewed on the outside of the hammock.

" ' To my friend Ben Brace, the last of the old Agamemnons, I leave all my cabin furniture, and all the

money which is due to me: he is to pay out of this what I owe Jorum since I squared the yards by showing him the ball; and he must take care Jorum does not make a dead pensioner drink grog, as the pursers make dead men chew tobacco. Last of all, having given away all that belongs to me, I request that the sail-maker may do his work in the sunshine, and clap his needle through my nose, in order to make sure that I, Tom Toprail, am *under canvass* for *Dead-man's hole*.'

"There, Ben," said he, "are my sailing orders after I have begun to drop down the river to *Gravesend*. Ben, if the governor will allow it, you can clap up a board over my grave cut in the shape of an anchor, and on it you can paint my name and age, and that I was the last but one of the old captains, and so forth; and finish by adding, —

Though his body is under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft!"

I steered away to the cottage, thinking to myself how odd it was that I liked the Hospital better than home, and I clapped it all down to this account: that having been born a fisherman and lived a seaman, I might as well die in a cabin as in a house. Besides, when I saw all my mess-mates about me, it made me think of the many happy days I had enjoyed; and I soon resolved that I would die amongst those with whom I had lived, fought, and bled.

Every day of my life I walked through the Painted-hall and looked at Nelson; but I was convinced more and more that old age was creeping fast upon me, for every object appeared dizzy, and although I wiped the glasses of my spectacles, yet day after day I saw worse out of the only eye which had served me for thirty years.

Susan was the worse for wear also. Her eyes were not so bright as they had been. Well, we all grow old together; and when we are close alongside of a craft for years in the same harbour, we don't see how gradually she requires paint and putty, and her sides get rather rusty without our thinking that blacking the bends might be beneficial; and when we come to look at the eyes of the rigging, we find

they would be none the worse for serving again. So it is with man and wife : all the stores for service wear out so gradually, that they hardly know when to have a survey, or declare them condemned for ever.

I was past seventy — and that's a long run for a man to make ; Susan was very near the hazy side of sixty : and we began to wag our heads, and tell the same story over and over again. On my return to the cottage on the day that I made Tom's testament, Susan met me at the door, exclaiming, " Good news, Ben ! good news ! "

" What's it all about ? " said I.

" Why," she answered, " we have had a lawyer here inquiring for you."

" And bad news enough, dame," said I, " it may be ; for those land-sharks never come sailing about a vessel unless they have smelt the bait towing overboard. What did he say ? "

" Why, that," said dame, " I can't well answer ; for when he found that you were not within, he said he was obliged to go to town about some action, and he spoke about an assault and battery."

" Bless me !" said I, " how very unlucky ! Perhaps the gentleman wanted some information about assaulting the battery on the Mosquito coast ; and I could have told him all about Nelson, when ——"

" Stop, Ben," said Susan ; " I know all about that, and I should have a bad memory if I did not. I remember all about the birds which ate half of you up, and the ships which sunk with the other half."

" Ah, dame," said I, " you're all wrong on that board ; but I'll trim the sails of your memory for you." I was about to give it her again, when a black-looking fellow hove in sight at the entrance-port of the cottage ; and says dame, " That's him, Ben !" I opened the door, and got the stranger to come to an anchor in the front room. As I was to speak first, being senior officer, I began —

" Fine day, sir."

" Rather wet and muddy," said he. " Is your name Benjamin Brace ? "

" If, sir," says I, " you want Benjamin Brace of the old

Agamemnon — the man who sailed with Nelson from the time he was the size of a handspike, until the day he died aboard the Victory ; — who was at St. Vincent, the Brush, the Nile, Cadiz, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, Boulogne, and Trafalgar, — I rather think I am the man, as may be seen from these certificates." I then wagged my right arm stump, and kept shutting the lid of my starboard eye like a weasel in sunshine.

" I don't know," said the lawyer, " much about all that ; but my object is to find one Benjamin Brace, late of Cawsand Bay, in the county of Devon, and some time since pensioner in Greenwich Hospital."

" I am the man, I tell you."

" Is there no other of that name ?" said the attorney.

Up I jumps like a marine when he hears " Grog ahoy !" at one bell ; and clapping my larboard arm akimbo, I looked him right in the face, — " Did you ever hear," says I, " of two Nelsons ?"

" No," said the stranger.

" Well, then," says I, " I never heard of two Ben Braces. There's my medal for the Nile, and here's the one for Trafalgar ; and here —"

" Stop, stop, my fine fellow," said he ; " I only want to make sure of my man. Have you any objection to walk down with me to any of the officers of the college, in order that they may identify you ?"

" I suppose," said I, " that all this showing colours and answering signals is to end in a fight or a friendship ; so come along, my hearty. — I'll be back in a moment, dame," said I. " Although I am rather queer in the hull, and some of the rigging damaged, yet I don't think that these gentlemen with the long legs are likely to make a prize of me. Come along, sir."

We started in company ; but we had not got far before we met one of the officers, who hailed me : " Well, Brace, how are you and your old friend Tom to-day ?"

" Many thanks, sir," said I, " rather better, although we are both of us clewing up for the anchorage. Maybe, sir, you'll be kind enough to tell this gentleman who I am — that I am Ben Brace ; for he is come down, I believe,

about an action with a battery, and maybe he wants my advice and account, to publish the same."

The attorney smiled, and said, good-naturedly enough, "It is upon some business of law, and I only wish to have the man identified."

"Oh!" said the officer, "I can assure you that this is old Ben Brace — we have only one of that name in the Hospital, and you may rest satisfied that he is the person."

"Thank you, sir," said the attorney; "that is quite sufficient. And now, Mr. Brace," said he, turning to me, "we will return to your home, for I have some good news for you."

"Thank you, Mr. Rivers," said I, speaking to the officer. "I never knew you do any but a kind service to every man in the establishment. God bless you! I remember as well as yesterday, when Nelson ——"

"Oh! Ben," replied Mr. Rivers, "I will not trouble you to tell me that now. I remember it all."

Well, we parted with Mr. Rivers, and tacked ship for the cottage. On our way home the long gentleman kept questioning me about my marriage, about Tapes's death, and all about who she was, and who he was, and every blessed thing that ever happened to them or to me since I left Cawsand until I was spliced. When we got to the door, he walked in like a messenger after a battle, as if the house was his own. Taking a chair, "Mr. Brace," says he, "call your wife. There, Mrs. Brace," said he, "sit down: Mr. Brace, do the same."

"Pray, sir," said I, "had you not better keep your chest warm by putting in a little inside lining, for my wife has always some good spirits in her locker. You know what women are," said I, giving him a private signal with my eye; "they have always something nice to cure the blue devils."

"Many thanks, Mr. Brace; I must decline. Pray now answer this question: Did you ever know one Mr. Tapes, of Exeter?"

"I did," said I, "and so did Susan; and, saving your presence, although he does allow Susan fifty pounds a year,

and pays it as regularly as the day comes, yet I must say that a greater scoundrel never weathered the gallows, or sailed through life without running foul of the yard-rope."

"He's clear enough of it now," replied the attorney, "for he is dead."

"Dead!" roared Susan; "and left me and mine beggars!" and she began to pipe her eye.

"Take a drop, dame," said I; "it will do you good. — Well, sir," said I, "if you have no objection to smoke, I'll take a pipe; for whenever I'm put out I smoke, and when I have any luck I drink; and so now, sir, if you please, tell us the worst."

"The worst is already told, Mr. Brace: your brother-in-law is dead."

"Dear! dear! what shall we do!" sobbed Susan. "In our old age we shall be turned out."

"Why, happen what will," said I, "I'm snug in the Hospital; and Jane will lend him a hand she once believed her father. This is not the squall that will blow the sails out of the bolt-ropes, or clap the craft on her broadside; it must blow harder than this before I lower my topsails, or clap my helm up to scud before the wind. Now, sir," said I, as coolly as if I had been standing at the wheel in a shower of rain, "you have told us the worst; perhaps you will tell us the best?"

"I was going to do so, only that I was interrupted. Mr. Tapes's death may be to you a cause of grief, ma'am," said he, "but it may a little alleviate your sorrows to know that he has left his whole property to you and yours."

"Oh! I shall go mad with joy!" said Susan. "Well, I always said, one of these days luck would turn. Oh! I must go and tell my daughter," and away she went.

"There she goes," said I, "and not like the rest of us. When the wind is light and the sky is clear, up go the royals and the flying kites; when it is cloudy and murky and squally, then it is reef topsails, up courses, and make the best we can of it under the storm staysails. But with woman, Lord love you! sir, she'd try to carry sky-sails in a squall, and then wonders that all her masts are blown out of her. I'm obliged to you, sir. It's not that I would

be ungrateful ; I own that Tapes did give us the money, and many a time it has made us happy. I would not have you or any man think, however, that I respected him. He behaved badly to his brother, and every one else he had to do with."

"Well," said the attorney, "I must be going, for my time is my money. There is one thing, however — a most important matter, which I had nearly forgotten. There is a confession drawn up by one Tackle before his execution ; and before you are put in possession of what is left you, that confession is to be burnt before the executors ; but should the seal have been broken and the confession read, there is a clause which would not be the most comfortable to you. We shall see all about that, however, in proper time. You must call upon us at Furnival's Inn to-morrow or next day, as suits your convenience. And now, as you have nearly choked me with smoke, I will wish you good morning."

"He was right," thought I to myself as he went out ; for when I began to talk about Tapes and Tackle, I had puffed rather a long cloud, and had made a smoke which none but an old signal-man could see through. Well, I ran and kissed Susan : and I'm blessed if I don't think every man, woman, and child in the parish heard all about it, and much more into the bargain.

CHAPTER VIII.

But mirth is turn'd to melancholy,
For Tom has gone aloft! — DIEDIN.

I SAW Tom a few days afterwards. It was clear that he had received secret instructions from aloft, for he was on his beam-ends in his bed, and had altered more in two hours than the last fifteen years, so much so indeed that I started back when I looked at him.

"What cheer, Tom," said I.

Tom twisted about like a porpoise on the grains, and began to gasp like a harpooned whale. I gave a hail for the assistant-surgeon; and when he came alongside of the old tar, he shook his head, and gave me a look as much as to say, "He's off."

"Don't you think, your honour," said I, "that brandy might give him a cast again?" for I recollected Tom's old tricks, and I thought he might be up to beating Tom Cox's traverse. This time, however, he never gave a squint of his eye, but laid out as still as a turtle under the half-deck.

"He has broken a blood-vessel," said the doctor; "and it's a chance if ever he speaks again. He must be kept quite still for the present; but," said he, lowering his voice, "at his age I have very little hope of his getting over it."

Going nearer to him, Tom heaved a convulsive sigh, got very pale, and seemed all abroad like. I sat down and watched him. With all his spirit, he was now as still and as quiet as the Atlantic in a calm; he never moved, and his breath came but feebly. "Ah!" said I to myself, "when a young man every thing was welcome, no matter whether pleasure or danger, and who was more lively than Tom? when the squall was heaviest, he would cling to the yard-arm with death staring him in the face whichever way he looked, and yet regard it no more than he would a mosquito. Then, in action who more daring? who would fling himself into a forest of boarding-pikes, with death seated at the top of every one of them, with a louder cheer than Tom, pushing Death aside with the blade of his cutlass as if he despised him?" I drew near him and took his hand. "Tom, how fares it with you?" He made an effort to speak and to raise himself up; but immediately fell back.

The nurse had left the room; but upon her return she went to the side of Tom's bed. "He's dead!" she exclaimed. With deep melancholy, I turned my steps homeward—I had lost my old messmate and my friend.

Susan endeavoured to cheer me. "When Tom is

buried," said she, "you will leave Greenwich, and cast off that livery, won't you?"

"Never, Susan!" said I, in a firm voice. "What! cast off the reward of my services? No. My coat is of itself a certificate that the man who wears it has done his duty, and that the country has not been unmindful of his services."

"I cannot see the necessity of your remaining here, Ben," she said. "You do not know the value of money—you throw it away without thought, contented with the allowance of the Hospital; but I know you will think of me. It is hard to be condemned to live here, although perhaps with money enough to be comfortable elsewhere."

"You may buy the Observatory if you like, if that will make you comfortable; but I will not start my anchors, for I'm moored for life. I think more of myself in this uniform, Susan," said I, laying down my pipe, for I was in grief and I smoked, "than if I was a lord of the Admiralty."

"Bless you! Ben, I always knew that your heart was warm," said Susan, for she said that my head was stricken; "but now Tom is dead, what more can you do for him? so leave this place as soon as you can."

"Not I. I must go and see him moored in his last harbour. I have got also to place the last rigging over his mast-head, to carry him to his grave, and see him covered up, and then ——"

"Ah!" interrupted Susan, with a tear, "you seem to think more about your friend than your wife."

"Susan," I replied, "that's the first unkind word you ever uttered since our marriage. Before we talk any more about this business, don't you think it would be as well to wait until we know what old Tapes has left us? Come, dame, kiss and let us remain friends! I do believe," said I, as I passed my sleeve over my face, "I am an old fool." I took up my hat and walked away.

All was done as Tom had desired. I set to work to parcel his tail with new ribbon. I bought the slops he had mentioned, and put them in his coffin; and when he was rigged in his shirt and trowsers, I fastened the medals over

his heart. I carried him, with some others to assist me, to his grave: I threw the earth over him myself; and when all the rest went away, I lingered by the side of the grave. The rain fell, the chill air of evening blew upon my old frame, I felt like a crazy old craft, separated from the convoy with which she sailed, dismasted in a gale, a plank started, the pumps broken, her crew disheartened, and her captain a coward. Slowly and silently I straggled to the Hospital. Immediately I lay down on my bed, I felt a cold shiver run through me, and sleep, which before came to me as my day's relief, this night never came at all. I thought of Tom without ceasing; his death had unmanned me more than that of the fifty men on board the Victory, before she returned a shot, at Trafalgar.

CHAPTER IX.

Mil. You lie, I believe.

King. Lie! lie! how strange it seems to me to be talked to in this style.

Mil. Come, come, sirrah, confess.

King and Miller of Mansfield.

IN the morning when I rose, a strange feeling was somehow all over me; my back ached with pain, and I felt through all my limbs as if a severe rheumatism had attacked me. I was hardly able to dress myself; and when I went to Susan, her first remark was, that I looked very—very ill. I had fixed this day to attend the lawyers; and as I was not on the doctor's list I wished to have the business all settled as quickly as possible; for whilst I lay thinking of Tom about midnight, I noticed a strange noise at the window, which I imagined to be what I had heard called a death-watch. These pains and aches at my age; moreover, were a kind of jog which shook me a little.

Looking up Tackle's confession (which might have been the history of his life, for all I knew—for the seal had never been touched by me, although, in covering the packet over with some other paper, I had placed another seal directly over Tackle's), I thought to myself I won't

open it, but take it just as it is. It will show that I never looked at the secret orders, but kept them as snug and as fast as lock and key could make them. I felt very ill, but the necessity of going to London gave me a little courage, which I backed up by a small drop of Dutch resolution, and getting into one of those long hearses with windows, which they call omnibuses, I poked myself up in the further corner, and there came to an anchor. I waited a long time before we made sail! So, by way of amusement, and whilst the man outside kept watching me, I took the confession out of my pocket, and began to tear off *my* cover. It happened that at this moment, another omnibus drove up alongside of us, and a bit of a squabble arose. I looked out, and kept tearing off the cover, until I began to feel that it was off. Looking at it, I saw that Tackle's seal had stuck to the brown paper covering, which I had torn off clean enough. I now remembered what the lawyer had said about it, if it was found that I had opened it. However, I never read a word, but clapped it back in my pocket. Thinks I, "Nobody ever doubted my word yet. I'll be all fair and above-board; I'll tell them all about it; and they'll see that I speak the truth."

It vexed me, however, all the way to Oxford Street, where I got into another omnibus, and told the look-out man to put me adrift at Furnival's Inn. I kept turning the business on every tack in my mind; and by the time I was let out abreast of a large building, I had determined how to act. When I got under the arch, I asked a man, who seemed lounging about for strange sail, if he knew where Mr. Hawk and Kite lived, and I was shown by him to the office, and gave a pull at the signal halyards. I was hailed by a young man, and taken by him into another room. Here I found four people sitting down; so I pulled out my watch, and hoped I had not kept their honours waiting, as I had still five minutes to veer and haul upon; it wanting that much to the appointed time.

"This is Ben Brace," said the gentleman who came to Greenwich. "There is no mistake in the person, and he will be identified again if it is requisite."

I took off my hat and smoothed my hair down with my

hand, and, giving my tail a bit of a shake, I made the gentleman a bow. Mr. Kite gave me a chair, which I declined to sit upon. I began to think there were some sharks among them, so I stood upright, with my eye fixed upon him, and I never budged an inch.

At last, when Hawk had whispered to one, and smiled at another, and squinted at me, and muttered to Kite, he found the wind of his lungs, and began to blow away after this fashion :—

“Pray, *Mr. Brace*,” said he with a smile, “have you brought with you a confession of one Tackle?”

“Yes, sir,” said I, standing as stiff as a midshipman on half pay.

“Have the kindness,” continued Hawk, “to give it to me.”

“If it’s all the same to you, sir,” I replied, “I’d rather be excused;” and I made him a bow, as much as to say, “Catch a weasel asleep!”

“Why not?” continued Mr. Hawk: “my partner, Mr. Kite, told you, I believe, that it was requisite we should be placed in possession of that document?”

“Yes, sir,” said I; “when you have given me my money. Then, you know, it’s all fair and above-board, and you may take the confession and burn it; but I’m not a-going to part with it until I get the money.”

“But, my good man——” commenced Hawk; but I cut off the tail of his speech.

“Avaust heaving, your honour,” said I; “this is the whole of it. I promised Tapes that no human being should see it as long as he continued to act as he did; and I’m not the man to break my word with him, for he has kept faith with me.”

“I see,” said Mr. Hawk, who took my manœuvring for a little suspicion. “I’ll remove your scruples: Tapes is dead, and therefore you cannot injure him by producing the document.”

“Not at all,” said I, “if you show me his sailing orders—his testament; because, do you see, although I cannot injure him if he is dead, yet I might hurt his character.”

Upon this they began to talk and to whisper again; and,

"If it's all the same to you, gentlemen," says I, "I should like this business to be carried on all fair and above-board. That gentleman, Kite, told me that Tapes was dead, and had left his money to me and mine; and that if I came here I should receive it. Here I am; and if so be that what I have said is all right, and you have got Tapes's testament, read it outright like men, and don't stand shuffling and whispering, and dodging like American bush-fighters. Besides, he told me that the confession was to be burnt before the *executioners*, without being read; and it will puzzle you, I know, to get all who clapped on the yard-rope together now. So, do you see, when you give me the money and show me the document (for I know a cuckoo from a Jamaica jackass when I see them together, although I am a sailor), then I will burn the confession before as many executioners as you can muster together; although, I tell you, some of them can't answer to their muster now. However, until I get what I am told is my own, I shall keep it safe and snug in my locker here, and that's the long and the short of it; and you may believe it all, for I swear to the truth of it."

"Well, sir," said Hawk, after he had carried on the war in a whisper, "we will read you the will; but as the document is rather long, you had better be seated."

I came to an anchor, for I felt very weak and ill; and somehow I thought that, owing to my cursed folly, I had ruined Susan and her child. I had a good mind to out with the thing and tell the plain truth; but then I knew that lawyers are sharks, and one never gets much mercy from one or the other. So I took the chair, and placed it right in front of the whole squadron; and sitting down, I placed my gold-covered hat upon my stick, clapped my timbers well apart, held out my arm at full stretch (supporting it with the stick), and looked like one of those parish chaps in churches, who keep the boys in order, and are allowed to make as much noise themselves as they like. "Go it, my hearties!" I called out, "and if you get to windward of Ben Brace, the devil may change his first lieutenant."

Kite took the deed, and after humming to clear his

voice, he began somehow after this fashion : — “ Know all men by these presents ” (Oh ! thinks I, as many of them as you like, old Tapes !) “ that I, Richard Tapes, being in sound mind and vigour of body, do thus dispose of all my worldly goods and chattels ; in the first place recommending my soul to God, in the full hope of a glorious eternity.”

“ The devil he does ! ” said I out loud, for I could not help it. “ Then all I can say is, I ’m blest if I don’t expect to die governor of Greenwich ! — Beg your pardon, gentlemen, but I could not help letting out a little of the cable of my mind ; now, heave ahead.”

Well, they all looked at me rather oddly ; Hawk left the door open, and Kite went on reading, but I could make out nothing, except that the word “ trust ” and “ Hawk,” and “ Kite,” and “ Brace,” and “ Susan,” went over and over again like boys playing coach-wheel. At last, when I thought all the wind was out of the thin man’s body, “ Heave and pall, sir,” said I, “ unship the bars ; it’s of no use heaving round any more ; I ’m blest if that gentleman has not hove clear through all. I can’t understand a word, and I ’ll pay any of you a golden guinea to put it into English.”

“ I thought as much,” said Kite ; “ it would be much better if you had appointed —— ” He got thus far, when Hawk stoppered his tongue and looked at him as if he could eat him.

“ Now, Mr. Brace,” said Hawk, addressing me, “ the thing is as clear as lawyers could make it, and adapted to the meanest capacity. The fact is, that the greatest pains were taken by my poor worthy friend Tapes, in order that no dispute could arise ; and, as you said before (and I think the words capital) the long and short of it is this ; and here is the clause : — ‘ That if you, according to your promise, have kept the document you possess unopened, the seal entire, and so that no doubt upon that point can be raised,’ Mr. Kite, Mr. Chatterton, and myself, in conjunction with Mr. Beedon, are to hold the money in trust for you and your wife during the term of your natural life ; and afterwards it is to become the property of your

wife's daughter, still to continue in trust ; for if she dies unmarried or without issue, the whole reverts to myself. ' But if the seal is broken ' (I turned rather pale, and Hawk observed it), " and here is the clause," he continued, " then the allowance of fifty pounds a year is to be continued, as heretofore, and to cease entirely at the daughter's death."

" I wonder," says I, " he did not put it in so many words, and then any man could unlay the stranns, and get at the *rogue's yarn*. Well, what's to be done now, sir ? " said I.

" Nothing but what can be done in a moment. We hold the money ; show us the seal unbroken, and the money will be paid you as the interest becomes due from the funds."

" But, mind you, Mr. Hawk," says I, " the confession is not to be read."

" On no account," said Hawk. " It is to be burnt, before us all, there, in that fire ; " and he went and stirred it up. " We have a person here who can swear to the handwriting of Tackle, for we have several letters of his during the time he was connected with Mr. Tapes. Here they are : it can be decided in a moment, from the peculiarity of his signature, which we are certain you could not forge. If the paper has nothing written on its outside, we shall open it, look at the signature or the handwriting, and decide it in a minute. If against you, you will have your remedy at law ; if favourably, into that fire goes the whole concern. Now, give us the paper."

" Hear me, gentlemen. I have sailed with Nelson, and been by his side in every battle, and have learnt to speak truth and shame the devil. From the time I was the height of a marline-spike, to this moment, I never told a lie to hurt an enemy or serve a friend. I don't want money ; I'm provided for. For myself, I neither want Tapes's money nor Tapes's kindness ; but I feel for my wife, because the property is properly hers — it is left on her account, and not on mine ; and, therefore, it is hard if through any carelessness of mine she should be left to want."

" Then you have opened the seal ? " said Hawk, his

little eyes looking through me, whilst Kite kept making signals behind his back for me to hold my tongue.

"I never said so," I continued; "and maybe I was only thinking what a scoundrel Tapes was to the last, to leave his sister-in-law dependent upon the integrity or the carelessness of an old sailor. But I'm not going to back out of the matter in this manner: all I want of you, gentlemen, is to believe me, to listen to what I have to say, and then to act fairly between man and man. When Tackle gave me his confession, it was about five minutes before he was hanged; he was as cool as a boatswain's mate going to give a man a dozen at the gangway. 'Ben,' said he, 'here is every thing concerning the business—you understand me; take it—tell Tapes you have it, and he will be frightened into doing something for your wife. But mind, if he does give you enough, promise me on your oath not to open it—not to read it; but keep it until he is dead, and then destroy it.' I told him I would. 'Remember, Ben,' he said, 'this is the last request of a dying man, excepting this—' and he placed his daughter's hand in mine. I took it, and said, 'So help me God, I will never read one word of it!' 'I'm satisfied,' said he; 'and now I am ready to die.' *He* believed me—he, gentlemen, when the rope was round his neck, believed me: and you, I think, cannot doubt the man whose word would be believed by every man in Greenwich.—Then, listen. On my way to your office this morning—But no—I'm before my yarn.—When Tackle died, I took his daughter on shore, and the first thing I did was to get a piece of tough brown paper. With this I covered up the confession, and I got Nelson's seal and stamped it. I then locked up the paper, and from the time the fifty pounds a year were paid, it has never seen daylight. Until this day my eye has never been directed towards it, nor has my curiosity ever been excited by the desire of reading it. I held it on a solemn promise; and I have kept my promise! To-day, gentlemen, in my way to town, I took off my own cover; and, in so doing, the seal which Tackle had placed came off also."

Hawk clapped his hands; and Kite stepped up: "Take

my advice, my old friend," said he, "and don't show it; keep it in your pocket until I can send you an adviser."

"Mr. Kite," said Mr. Hawk, "I desire you to leave this room directly; Mr. Brace is not your client, I presume. He admits the seal to be torn off; and the words expressly are — 'the seal entire, so that *no doubt* can be entertained upon the point.' *No doubt*, gentlemen — remark that, and couple it with the other words, and who shall dispute to whom the property belongs? Give me the paper, and let these gentlemen be witnesses that the seal has been removed. As for the reading of the paper, that, of course, we shall form our own opinions about. A man does not open a seal without going further; and if you, after the warning given you by Mr. Kite, have opened the cover at all, you must have been either mad or drunk. The fact is clear: he read the confession after the fifty pounds had been paid; and he has invented this story of opening it to-day, because he finds the money likely to slip through his fingers."

"Avaust heaving there, if you please, sir!" said I: "the day is gone by when I should have shaken the words of sorrow out of your throat for what you have now said: but, sick as I am at this time, and feeling a heavy squall about to burst upon me, without sufficient hands to shorten sail, I have nothing left but to up helm and scud. If you had acted like a man, I would have placed the paper in your hands: here it is — the seal broken, I'm too much of a sailor to deny it; but, as I know such as you are nothing but landsharks, I'm blessed if I don't take that gentleman's advice, and I'll get a bigger shark than yourself to fight you! — Sir, I'm obliged to you," said I to Kite; "you're an honour to your profession. It shows an honest man when he comes forward to protect the old, the poor, and the innocent; but as for that other fellow, who seems as hungry as Port-Royal Tom, he'll find it hard to get the paper, and without it he cannot get the money."

"Stop, Mr. Brace," said Hawk, "and understand me. The money was left under certain conditions; those conditions are favourable to me. You will only rush headlong into ruin by opposing me. A writ of discovery will be

issued ; your not producing the paper will be the strongest evidence against you : and ultimately, when it is brought forward, you will find a heavy bill to discharge, and no money to do it with ; for from this moment I shall stop the payment of the fifty pounds a year, until the matter is decided. Mr. Kite has, under the influence of his feelings (and I feel for you and yours as much as any man), advised you to keep back this paper ; he has advised you badly. The consequences will be ruinous — your wife's misery and want beyond a doubt."

" Ah ! there it is !" said I. " For myself, I don't value the money any more than a loaf of soft tack ; but for her who has been a kind wife and good helpmate to me, and who might justly look forward to this money, to make her slip easily off the ways, until the dog-shores are sent adrift, — for her I do feel. But, sir, I am very ill, and nearly broken down ; my anchor's a short-stay peak, my sails loose, the yards braced for canting. Surely you, who call yourself a man, would n't run on board of me like a pirate, and rob me of the little I possess as my cargo. I'll do what is right and fair ; but I am not going to strike my colours without a broadside. I'm not going to see my poor old wife wrecked on the bank, without veering away some cable to assist her. Here's the paper," and I clapped my hand in my bosom to get it out again : when Kite said, —

" Keep it where it is. Mr. Hawk, as an honourable man, cannot wish to possess a document to which at present he has no right. You are looking very ill ; get home as quickly as possible, and I will either come myself or send you a proper adviser. You have already shown too much in showing the seal off ; but a hundred circumstances may arise to assist you ; and when you think you have the least chance, you may have the greatest. The more desperate a case is, the more likely certain attorneys are to win it. I am not one of them ; but I owe you a debt of gratitude of which you are ignorant just now, and I will not see you ruined by my partner."

" There's my hand, sir," said I : " you speak like an honest man. I go home almost broken-hearted with sor-

row. I could have weathered any squall which only blew against myself ; but, instead of towing the craft which has stuck close to my side for thirty years in safety, I have run her down when the harbour of security was under our lee—that I can't get over, for ' I feel it,' as Nelson said when his death was approaching, ' rising in my breast.' I am, sir, very ill indeed—I never felt so weak before, and it does not require much of a sea to shake such an old hull to pieces."

" Will you take a glass of wine, Brace?" said Mr. Kite kindly.

" No, sir, I thank you ; I could not drink in this house for the universal world. I can hold on until I get home, although I feel rather weak and giddy.—My service to you, sir," said I to Hawk ; then I bowed to the two others, who had never said a word the whole time, and I left the room. Mr. Kite followed me : " Take my advice, Brace," said he, as he shook me by the hand : " lock up that paper in your cabin in the Hospital—don't let a soul read it or look at it ; and I need not tell you to act as honourably as you have hitherto done yourself. Get home ; you want a doctor of medicine more than one of laws just now. Don't agitate yourself by telling your wife what has happened ; but keep quiet, and trust in me."

" It was only yesterday, sir," said I, " that I buried the only man who could say a word about Tackle ; and when I placed him in his grave, I got thinking about all we had done and seen together, until the evening came on, and the rain fell a little. I got up with a coldness I never knew before, and I was only able to muster up strength enough to come to town, kept up by the anxiety of my poor Susan, who thought that once more she would wear a pendant from her mast-head, and sink into her grave a respectable old woman. If I have ruined her, I shall never live to hear her tell me of it. God bless you, sir !—Hoy ! omnibus, ahoy !—why, you want a crow-bar to pick your ears with—give us a lift to Charing Cross." And I waved my hand to Kite, and got safe home.

CHAPTER X.

I'm bubbled!
 Oh! how I am troubled!
 Bamboozled and bit!
 My distresses are doubled! — *Beggars' Opera.*

WHEN I got home that evening, I did not require the purser's steward to stop my allowance. I was in the doctor's list hard and fast; I felt all the pains and aches of cold, rheumatism, disappointment, vexation, and sorrow.

Ill as I was, however, I took Kite's advice, and before I went to Susan I locked up the cursed paper just as it was. Having stowed it under all in my chest, and covered it over with my heaviest traps, — "There," said I, "stick there! and I wish my fingers were off my hand for having touched you!" Then with a heavy heart, not like that I used to have (for it seemed like a weight, heavy enough to sink me) I went to Susan.

Like all women, she was standing with the door open ready for the news; and long before I weathered the doorway she began. "Now, Brace, make haste—tell us all about it. How much has he left us? when are we to have it? I have sent for the crape and the black bonnets. Is he buried yet? When are you to go to town again? I wonder if we can't get some of the money to-morrow. Lord! Ben, you look very pale—take a little brandy, and then talk as fast as you can."

"Susan," said I, as I sat down in the chair, "they say it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good; and mayhap you know, that when the wind's foul for one, it is fair for another. It's of no use, dame, your asking as many questions as the clerk of the check when he comes to muster a ship's company in the harbour, and never waiting for an answer. The last question, however, is the easiest answered:—I am ill; I feel that I am following in poor Tom's wake, and that before long I shall be under hatches, as he is now. No, dame, take away the bottle—that's

not the kind of spirit I want now ; and as for Dutch courage, I never required that. I have nearly expended all my breath ; and when a man has been blowing away at the bellows of his lungs for seventy-seven years, why he's lucky if he gets wind enough out of them to keep up even a flickering flame. Sit down, dame ; I've much to tell you. There—come nearer to me, and give me your hand. Let me see—it is now some thirty years ago since you and I were spliced ; and though we have seen the rough and the smooth of life, I don't think we have ever showed our colours as enemies. When I remember, too, what you were at Cawsand ; how through me your former husband was detected in the smuggling—how in poverty he died, and how, when the storm was the hardest, the fog the thickest, I stepped forward—ay, and gladly stepped forward ;—moreover, when you recollect that I loved you as a boy—loved you as a man—loved you as a husband and as a friend,—I say I don't think, when you hear what I have to tell you, that you will let me be swamped without lending me a hand."

" Ben," said she, " I don't like this kind of beginning—it brings many a bitter reflection along with it ; but, thank God, it brings with it an increasing gratitude, without the remembrance of it deadening the obligation. You look very ill, Ben,—you had better go to bed, and to-morrow we'll talk over all this."

" You know," said I, " that this morning I went to London. You saw the paper sealed,—and you know that ever since Tackle's death I have never overhauled the contents of the paper. I can guess what's inside of it : of course it is merely, that Tapes and his brother were partners in the concern, and that any discovery would have turned all the King's lawyers like a pack of hounds on the scent. When I was looking on at a quarrel this morning in that painted hearse they call an omnibus, I broke the seal : it seems that by doing this we lose every farthing that was to have come to us. You start, Susan ; and well you may. Now, as I cannot find any good to tell you, I don't like to croak of evil."

Susan took her handkerchief and swabbed her eyes.

"It's of no use, Susan," said I, "making bad worse: one of the lawyers said he would come and advise me."

I could not stand Susan's tears. I knew that she who looked always forward with some hope that one day she would be in a better condition, could never bear the news which I had to tell, and I rubbed my sleeve across my eyes, for I felt that I could have braved any blow rather than this. Somehow I could not plug up the scupper-holes of my eyes, and a tear or two did drop over the lids.

"Forgive me, Ben," said Susan, as she wound her arms round me,—“forgive me, Ben, or I shall hate myself for ever! It was only a moment of disappointment. There,” she continued, as she took my hand,—“there, only say you forgive my ingratitude, in having brought tears into the eyes of the most generous of men, and I'll never think of the money any more! Can't we be as nappy as we have been? There, look at all the little comforts we have got together; and now, in our old age, what would be the benefit to us if we had the gold of the whole world? Only kiss me, Ben, and smile again, and I will never say another word to make you unhappy.”

I took her in my arm, and as when the sea runs highest, and breaks with the greatest violence on the beach, rushing up to the very cliff, so it recedes the farther as it again ebbs back, carrying with it half the shingle which stopped it before,—so did I feel my heart beat twice as strongly for my poor Susan.

"You are right, my Susan," said I. "Is it not odd, that when we have rubbed through life upon short allowance, we should find ourselves, just when the gale is the strongest, and we less able to weather it, with more affection than we required to begin the cruise? So it is through life. The shipwrecked boy who has clung to a plank (the last that broke adrift from the sinking vessel), and who has held to it for his existence until his strength nearly fails him, finds, when assistance does come, ten thousand times more aid than would have served him at the first. It is true, this money might have given you a larger house and more to eat; but if this cottage is sufficient, we can do without Tapes's money, which, for my part, may all go

to the devil or the lawyer. One thing, Susan, has always occurred to me through life, and that is, 'not to cry out before I am hurt.' A man may shorten sail when he sees the squall upon the water, but he is a fool who furls sails in a calm because a gale may come. Many's the time I have seen the black cloud settle on the horizon and threaten the heaviest fall of rain; yet a flash of lightning has come, and every drop has fallen clear of the ship, whilst the cloud dispersed and the bright sun shone full upon us. I'm ill, Susan—more so than you think, and in spite of the rain I'll go to my cabin; for if I was to die out of Greenwich, I should never lay my head in peace. I'll ask Sir William to let you be my nurse; he is too generous to refuse such a favour; and besides, he knows that I would rather see him at my last moment than any other man alive. Good night, my dear Susan! I know you'll forgive me. I never read a word that was in the paper; and, whatever you may think of me, I am sure you will never suspect me of telling a lie. If I get worse in the night, I'll send for you; but I think I can hold on. God bless you!"

She gave me another kiss; and when I walked through the gates, I felt happier than I had done for years, for I felt that she would be able to bear the blow which my carelessness had inflicted upon her.

The next morning I found my chest like a midshipman's—every thing on top, and nothing at hand. In stowing away the paper, I had piled every thing I could over it; and being, I suppose, a little adrift, I did not stow them away as I generally did. I awoke better, but still with some odd feeling which I did not like;—I was anxious to see Susan through the difficulty. When she came to see me, "Oh, Ben," said she, "you make me happy, for I can see you are better. We shall be all right again."

The day was very fine, and I thought if I just took the stiffness out of my legs, it would do me good. Accordingly I popped on my hat, and taking my stick, I steered away to sun myself on one of the benches; and there I got thinking about stearn-boats, and Indiamen, and every blessed thing but the lawyer and the paper. "What's

the use of masts and sails, and all such expenditure," thinks I, "when, by working a little smoke through a funnel, it does not signify a straw if the wind is foul or fair, but away the vessel will go eight knots an hour straight on end and make her port?" Well, I got turning this end for end in my mind, and thinking how nicely we should have been served during the war if these things had then been in use, and what a glorious opportunity it would be at the opening of the next to fit out a good-sized boat, carrying one long gun on a pivot, and about forty men for a crew! Not your picked-up-along-shore fellows, with long tails to their coats, and cigars in their mouths, but some of the chips-of-the-old-block fellows, with large trowsers and broad shoulders, who would look to windward in a gale of wind, when it blowed so hard that if they did not shut their mouths they would be blown up. Then it would be—paddle away within long range, make her out well, touch her up at a distance, run alongside when the colours are down, clap a tow-rope on board and see her safe under an English flag, and out again, before a sailing vessel with a foul wind would have got ten miles from the place, and half the privateers on the sea would have been within sight to recapture their prize. "Ay, if ever another war does begin," thought I (but somehow we have got in the doldrums in that respect), "I would rather be on board of a good steamer than the best frigate in the navy;—not but that I remember the delight of sitting under the fore-castle bulwark when the sea flew over the craft, and when we spun our yarns, and felt safe and snug in our fancy frigate."

Well, I got thinking of one thing and another, when I was startled by the noise of a carriage which drew up alongside the gates, whilst two chaps in cocked hats and long canes, who had been standing abaft, jumped down, opened the cabin door, and out comes the captain and his wife. Up I got directly, and steered towards the gate; for I thought I had never seen so fine a concern, with such a crew. The gentleman was a man about five-and-forty, togged off to the nines; and he gives his arm to his lady, and makes sail right towards me, steering for the governor's

house. Well, I did as we always did, saluted a stranger when he came into port ; so, as they went by, I took off my hat and scraped my leg. The lady was looking the other way at a gingerbread barge belonging to the Lord Mayor, which was bringing down a batch of hungry fellows to eat small fish ; but the gentleman took off his hat, and said to his lady, for I heard him, " My dear, you did not see that gallant old fellow who welcomed you to Greenwich."

She gave a hasty cast of her eye, and they went on. " Well," thought I, " now we have exchanged salutes, I'll just ask the admiral's name ;" so I steered up to the gates and hailed the servants, — although, to be sure, they looked more like Austrian generals than English footmen.

" What cheer, lads?" said I ; upon which all these land-lubbers began to grin. " Cheer!" said one ; " who cheered? I should think, old boy, you didn't give a cheer when the Frenchmen whipped off your arm, or bunged up your eye?"

" Then you're just on the wrong tack," said I ; " for it was at Trafalgar, and I did not value my arm, no, not at a shilling, when I thought of the victory."

" Ah!" said one of them, " that happened before we were born, old boy, and we are not going to believe all you choose to tell us about that." — " What a rum coat the old fellow has got on!" said another ; " And twig his cocked-hat!" — " Why," said the coachman, " I wonder he walks about, when the pigs might mistake his legs for cabbage-stalks!" Upon which they all set up a laugh ; and one fellow takes off his white gloves, and claps them in his pocket, whilst the other asked who had the honour of making my clothes.

" I say, my lads," said I, for there was a crowd of pensioners and idlers gathered about, " is that the way you answer a civil question? I thought you servants were taught better manners."

" Servants!" they all exclaimed: " mind your own business, old boy, and don't talk about what you don't understand."

" What!" said I, " are you ashamed of your rigging, — are you ashamed of your master's clothes? Now look

here," says I, as I showed the Greenwich mustering suit: "these clothes are the reward of honest service for my country. I have fought for it — bled for it — whilst you powder-monkeys have only cleaned your master's shoes, or carried away the plate on which he fed. — What, strike me!" said I, for one of the fellows raised his stick; "strike Brace if you dare, and we'll haul you through every pond in the place, and wash the flour off your head under the pump. Don't commence action," said I to some of my messmates; "but only let them fire the first shot, and we'll soon see if we, old as we are, can't tackle them to their hearts' content. I only asked a civil question — I wanted to know to whom the carriage belonged, and I was then going to take them over and give them something to drink the King's health, when they began to jeer an old man of seventy-seven with only one arm. But what can you expect from chaps who are ashamed of their own colours and their master's livery?"

These flamingoes began to think it was no good battling the watch with us; so they all three got upon the fore-castle of the coach, and they steered away for a public-house. "Here's after them!" said about a dozen of the old ones; "and we'll get them into a line for their impudence!" and I was left alone by the gate. As for the line business, that was a failure; for the servants, not liking to get amongst the old boys, remained on the coach-box, and drank their beer aloft, and shortly returned. I was backing and filling about the place (for the weather was warm, and I felt better by being in the air), when I saw the servants come down by the run from the box, clap their scrapers all right and square, and handle their sticks like the drum-major of a regiment. I turned round, and I saw the lady and gentleman coming towards the carriage, accompanied by Sir William. I heard him say, "I dare say your lordship will find him at his wife's cottage, for he generally goes there about this hour. Poor old fellow! he was rather ill last night, and he is getting very aged for a sailor."

Well, thinks I, what can the doctor mean by a great age for a sailor? but I heard his reason.

"When they first enter the navy," said the doctor, "they are habituated to much ardent spirits, and the continued use of them is more pernicious than all the fatigues they undergo. Oh, here is Brace!" said he. Upon which I took off my hat, and made a bow. "This is Lord Nelson's old follower for whom your ladyship inquired."

She looked at me — I knew her at once. I did not do what my heart prompted me to do — run and kiss her, and welcome her who had come to me at the very moment when I was most beset with difficulty; for I thought it would be wrong for me, an old sailor in the Greenwich uniform, to take hold of a lady covered up with silks, and with a bonnet on her jib large enough for a coal-scuttle! Well, I was fairly taken aback; and it was of no use turning the hands up to brace about, although I had got stern-way, and was backing a small distance off. I can't write what I felt — it was uncommon to me. I could have kissed her; and yet I felt as if the thought was a kind of presumption. My heart bade me go forward like a man and an uncle, and then I thought discipline kept hauling me back. It was a regular squabble between affection and duty; but when the heart's in the right place, affection will carry the day, without neglecting one's duty. The servants were looking (the coachman had placed himself as upright as a pump-bolt), Sir William had just called me, his lordship was eyeing me; when what does Jane do, but she drops her rain-preventer, and she gets head-way upon her, runs me right aboard, claps her arms round my neck, falls to a-kissing me, and bursting out a-crying, said, "Did you think that I could ever forget you, uncle?"

"My eyes and limbs!" said old Lanyard, as he hobbled away, "that is a queer go, surely; there's old Brace a-kissing the lord's wife!"

My heart was full. "Blessings on you, Jane!" said I, "and now that I see you happy — I don't care how soon I die. Lord love you, and bless you! your heart always was good. I knew that you would come and see me."

"Give me your hand, my fine old fellow," says his lordship: "Jane has often told me of your kindness to her, and the manner in which you behaved to her."

"Belay all that," said I, interrupting him: "not a word about it. I'm at this moment in great distress about her father's affairs; and if Jane — (I beg your honour's pardon, but I can't help calling her Jane) — will just let your honour unlay the strands of this difficulty, you will make me and my poor wife happy for ever."

"Oh!" said Jane, "take me directly to Susan: I have never seen her since I was a little child, and still I remember her pretty face."

"Get into the carriage, Brace," said his lordship: "and we'll drive to the cottage. Come, Jane, let me hand you in first." And off he walked with his wife.

Well, it was a fine sight to see those footmen who had jeered me, standing at attention, one fellow ho'ding the door open, and the other standing like a marine at muster, whilst I, the old sailor, was handed into the carriage by a lord. I felt I had always done my duty, and therefore I was not ashamed to look any man in the face.

"Now, listen to me," said Jane, "and let me run up my history. I dare say you know already that my husband is a sailor. But listen, when you last saw *her* (for you never would mention her name, you know) — and when you made your last request for an admission into Greenwich, you never saw me, you truant old fellow! and I was waiting for my last kiss. I shortly afterwards went into the country with her, and remained there until I was sixteen years old — you know I was born in 1792. Now, instead of seeing the pretty little girl, as I was in 1805, you must remember that I am now forty and more, so that I am getting old and speak my mind. I learned from Hardy that you were at Greenwich, and at that time I had only the wish, not the power, to serve you. Much as I would have given to have come down here and seen you settled ——"

"Moored for life, my dear," interrupted his lordship.

"Yet I neither had the means nor the permission to gratify that desire. I heard that henceforth your life would be one of ease and comfort; that you would sleep without having one ear open for a summons; and that you would enjoy comparative luxury. I well know ""

might have been an officer ; I have heard Nelson tell *her* that he wanted to make you one, but that you preferred following him ; and, uncle, you are a much greater man now than if you were laid up in ordinary in rotten row (you see I have learned all your sea-terms), as his lordship says is his lot. In 1810 I married Captain Hennington — here you see him. He was sent on the North American station, and I, by way of being as near him as possible, went to Bermuda, and lived there ——”

“ I pity you, Jane,” said I ; “ for never was there such a sandy hole in the world, with its white houses and cedar trees. As for water, why if it does not rain for a month, they have their mouths open like alligators catching flies, and they are obliged to preserve that stuff as a sailor does his grog. — I beg your honour’s pardon, but I could n’t help it.”

“ Talk away, Ben Brace,” said his lordship ; “ there’s no distinction now between officer and man : I’m on half-pay, and you in Greenwich.”

“ Now, Hennington,” said Jane, “ let me talk, if you please. I have more to tell uncle than you can have ; principally because I want to explain to him how it was he never saw me. I remained at Bermuda until after the peace in 1815, indeed, I did not return home until 1816 ; but at that time Hennington’s father was alive, although seriously ill at Florence. I came home with him in his frigate, and she was paid off at Portsmouth ——”

“ Of course, ma’am,” said I, “ ships from a foreign station always go to Portsmouth, or the River.”

“ That ’s all right,” said his lordship.

“ It’s all wrong, uncle,” said Jane, smacking my hand ; “ remember you are under my command,” said she, smiling, “ and keep ‘ Silence fore and aft ! ’ — We did not stay a week in England, and during that time I went down to see my husband’s brother in Yorkshire ; but I sent you some money.”

“ Ay ! ” said I ; “ I thought it came from you, although, Lord love you ! I was half inclined to think you had made a ‘ haul of all ’ of your memory, and that Ben Brace was paid off from your books.”

"Nonsense, dear uncle ! you could not have fancied any such thing, unless you believed me to be an ungrateful creature. —No sooner, however, had we paid our visit, than my husband, using his man-of-war-like commands, gave me sailing orders for Italy ; and as soon as we could contrive to get ready, we started for Florence. Here he found his father ill—very ill ; but being one of those men who have lived steadily in their youth, he survived a life of mental exertion only to fall into second childhood. His memory was fast going, and he seemed never very anxious to exert it. Year after year passed away—he lived, although he might be supposed dead, for he took little notice of any thing : he could not think, he could not reason, he could not remember : he was fed as a child, controlled as a child."

"Say no more of that, Jane," said his lordship, "it is too painfully impressed upon my mind. Of all scenes, the most dreadful to have brought familiarly before our eyes is that of seeing the man die at top first—to see the still robust stem unable to put forth any leaves—to see the man who was once all energy, all sense, become a weak and drivelling idiot. He lingered in this dreadful state for upwards of fifteen years, kept alive by her anxious care."

When his lordship said this, and I saw a tear standing in his eye, I could n't help taking Jane's hand ; and as I kissed it, I gave her an old man's blessing.

"It is useless, I believe, uncle," she continued, after giving me a look of acknowledgment, "ever to dwell upon painful scenes : it is of no use looking back—we should look forward. On the death of his father, my husband at the beginning of this year returned with me to England. Some family business took us immediately into Yorkshire ; but no sooner had we made ourselves comfortable in London, than one of my first cares was to look for you. You see before you your captain, uncle, and you will obey his orders. I leave him to tell you what he wishes, for you will find in him all the genuine worth of the seaman, with all the sterling qualities of the gentleman."

We drove up to the door of the cottage, and when Susan

saw her old husband in his blue stockings lugged out of the cabin-door of the carriage, she didn't know what to make of it. She kept bobbing about like a trim buoy over the best bower-anchor in a short sea, but immediately recollecting that it was Saturday, and that her clean Sunday's cap was upstairs, away she bolted to clean herself to muster at division.

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said I, "but I have something to say to you quite alone." His lordship came into the little garden behind the house. "Your honour has heard of me afore," I began; "and I hope that, whatever character I may have had through life, I have always had that of being all fair and above-board with every man.

"Did Jane," said I, "ever tell you, before you made a splice for life that a foremast-man, a Greenwich pensioner, was her uncle, and that her father——" Here I stopped short and looked at him; for I did not know whether I was right to blow the gaff upon her.

"She told me," said his honour, "every word about her unfortunate father and all your kindness to her. I loved her the more for her open-heartedness. But I have since learned, Ben, from her that her father left with you a confession of his former life. This paper I want you to give me, in order that I may destroy it."

"I beg your honour's pardon," said I, "but I can't part with that paper. No man has seen the contents of it—it has never been in any other hands but mine. Your lordship will know what value I ought to put upon this document by the mischief which has already arisen out of it;" and I told him every particular of Tapes's death, and the unfortunate business of my having broken the seal.

"I know you well enough, Ben," said his lordship, "from all I have heard of your character, to believe every word that you have said. I very much fear, however, that if the wording of the will is so express as you mention, we have little chance of overthrowing the attorney; still it shall not be for the want of exertion, or the fear of expense, if we do not disappoint him. How much has Tapes left you?"

"I can't say, your honour," I replied, "for the lawyer

never mentioned that ; but he rubbed his hands and was overjoyed when he found the seal was broken, so that I anticipate there must be a good sum left. It's not for myself, my lord, that I care about this business, but it is for Susan and her daughter. For those two to be robbed by this rascal does hurt me ; and when I think that I am the cause of even a doubt, it makes my poor old heart beat quicker, and wears out my old hull more than all the rollings and pitchings in the Bay of Biscay. My wife was once in better circumstances, my lord ; and I thought that, after all the squalls had passed, she might run into port with a fair breeze and smooth water."

"Don't take it so much to heart—I will take care to send you down my solicitor. All the expense shall be borne by me ; and, by way of keeping soul and body together until we meet again, take this money ; it comes from a sailor to a sailor. Since that fellow has ceased to pay the fifty pounds, you will allow me to pay it, and any thing more you may require."

"Come here, you two old sailors," said Jane. "We must have a council of war ; I am going to be president, and uncle is to be the culprit."

In we walked, and Jane, Lord love her ! to see her in our cottage, with a smile of contentment, taking Susan's hand in hers ! I could not help saying, "Such a woman as your ladyship—" (she put her finger on my lips and said, "Jane, if you please, uncle Ben")—"deserves to be happy. I have heard the parson say, that a good heart and a quiet conscience carries with it its own reward in the cheerfulness and contentment of the mind ; and surely you must be happy, when every action of your life has been to promote the happiness of others."

"Ben," said she, "I shall have you appointed one of his lordship's chaplains. You take a wrong view of the case, however, in one respect : a youth of labour and toil, followed by an honourable old age, is the greatest blessing of life ; and you may lay your head on your pillow, and be certain that a grateful niece will never forget what is due to her uncle, her protector, her friend. Now, prisoner, come into court. You are accused by your wife of a de-

termination to disobey her wishes, and to remain in Greenwich, although you are possessed of certain monies sufficient for your honourable maintenance elsewhere. What say you to this charge?"

"Only this, Mrs. Honourable President," said I, "that I am guilty, and not guilty, of the charge. That I intend to die in Greenwich is true enough, but still I shall be glad to do any thing else to make the remainder of the life of my Susan as comfortable as I can."

"As for the other business," said his lordship, "I think we shall dispose of that in due time; but we don't get justice in England either without time or money. My solicitor will tell you what to do; and when the gentleman (who is a partner of the one who claims the property) comes down, you will speak handsomely to him, and desire him to call upon me, mentioning that I have provided you with legal advice. — Come, Jane, the day gets on, and we must be going. Ben knows where to find us; and we will send the carriage for him and his wife to-morrow, and he shall dine with us early, so as to get home betimes. So good-b'ye, uncle Ben!" said his lordship; and after a friendly shake of the hand they got into the carriage and drove off.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh, 't is a day
Of jubilee, cajollery;
A day we never saw before. — *Tom Thumb.*

"BEN," said Susan, when the carriage had driven off, "I hope that we shall be quite alone with them, when we dine at Lord Hennington's to-morrow; or perhaps it would be better if there were a great number, and then we might be overlooked, for I'm sure I shall make some mistake and be ridiculous."

"I don't much think, Susan," said I, "that many men

in the Greenwich uniform ever dined with the great lords of the Admiralty ; but this good, I know, will come out of it, — it will teach those servants of his lordship to know an honest man by the cut of his jib ; and also, that although the rigging of a ship may come from the dock-yard, and the hull be rather old and rusty for want of blacking the bents, yet it may be built of good stuff, and not to be despised. Look what a handful of money his lordship gave me, Susan ! and he promised to give me fifty pounds a year. So that, in spite of the lawyer, we have not gone to leeward on this tack ; and I begin to think we may weather the attorney, after all."

It was late when Mr. Kite came. I told him all about his lordship ; and this honest fellow said, " I am sincerely glad, Mr. Brace, that you have some person on whom you can rely, who will see you through this business. I have looked at the will, and certainly, as far as I can judge, the case is much against you. It seems the intention of the testator was to this effect, — that the money should be yours, subject to some regulations and restrictions of which it is useless now to speak, provided it was evident that even you could never have read the confession. And for this reason it is mentioned that the seal being broken should be a sufficient evidence against you. I confess, at the moment I told you not to give up the document, I considered, and I do still consider, the case to be desperate. You have, it appears, found a good friend in Lord Hennington, who will take care you have justice done you. I am an old sailor myself, and thought it was better that you should not surrender without a fight."

" And I'm blessed if I do, Mr. Kite ! I'm obliged to you," said I, " and so is his lordship ; and if I weather the point, I won't forget the pilot who showed me the passage through the shoals."

" Have you examined the document, Mr. Brace ? "

" Not I, Mr. Kite. As you advised, so I did, — I placed it under all, in my chest ; and that's safe and snug as a vessel in Dock-yard Creek at Malta."

" Since I cannot be of any further service to you, Mr. Brace," said he, " I shall wish you good-b'ye. Yours is

a hard case, but something may still turn up. I really wish you success; although, I again say, I despair of it. If I could see the document, I could speak more positively."

"That's what no man living will do but the judge upon the bench," said I. "His lordship wanted to see it; but I have promised and pledged my word, and I would not show it to the First Lord of the Admiralty himself. Many thanks to you, sir; you are an honest man, and that's more than I can say for the other man. There's my hand, sir, and God bless you!"

Well, he went away, and I went to bed; and I slept better for the prospect of being able to have a good stand-up fight before I was laid up in ordinary for ever. The next morning, when I got to Susan, in came a long, sandy-haired fellow, with a small eye as bright as a fire-fly in Jamaica on a dark night. He inquired for me, and lugged out a note he had received the evening before from Lord Hennington.

"I come, Mr. Brace," he began, "according to orders received last night, to inquire into this business, and see how far it is advisable to contest the matter. I have not been idle, I assure you; I have seen the will, and now you must show me the document."

"Beg your pardon, sir; but I shall do no such thing."

"But you must," said he.

"Must!" said I; "who can make me? who can make a man break his word? Is there any law to make a man a rascal?"

"Plenty to save rascals, at any rate," said the lawyer. "But just consider: how can I advise you unless I know exactly how far you have committed yourself? Tell me the whole story."

Well, I spun him the yarn, — mentioned the name of the omnibus — the day it happened — the fight — the words of the cad — the name of the other omnibus — the scene at Hawk's, and so on.

"Did Hawk ever have the deed in his hand?"

"Indeed he had not," said I, "and never will."

"Well then," said he, "it appears I can make no more

of it at present than to inquire of the cad, and to send word to Hawk that he must apply to me for further information in the case. He will file a bill of discovery, I suppose ; but as Lord Hennington is resolved to contest the business to the last, I shall do all in my power to embarrass the proceedings. If any thing more transpires, you will hear from me." Away he went, leaving me more resolved than ever that no man living should see it.

About five o'clock up comes the carriage, and half the neighbourhood turned out to see it. Yesterday's business had given the idle a great desire to know who we were, and all manner of reports were in circulation. Some declared Susan was the mother of Jane, who had been stolen in her youth by gipseys, and ultimately married a lord who fell in love with her beauty. Others said she was my daughter by a former wife ; but every one knew of the kiss in the Hospital, and every blessed mother's son of them had seen the carriage. Now they beset the door, to see Susan, whom they remembered for years, placed in the carriage, and Ben Brace, the old pensioner, driven to London like a lord. I was glad of one thing ; which was, that we had no fellows with cauliflower heads and long sticks, stuck up like painters on a grating over the ship's stern,— we had only the look-out man on the forecastle, and he was a jolly-looking fellow.

" Now then, sir, if you please to get in, for I must be in town by six o'clock," said he ; and he opened the door

" Avaust heaving, shipmate," said I ; " we never sail without ballast ; and if we were to carry on without some of that inside lining, we should capsize if we stove in stays suddenly round a corner. But I see you don't understand me : this is it—we must freshen hawse before we start."

" What ! " said he, " want fresh horses ? that is a good one ! Why, do you suppose *my* cattle can't go eight miles without a change ? "

" Lord love you ! " said I to Susan ; " what precious fools these landsmen are ! Get him the bottle of brandy, and perhaps he will understand that, although it may be French. There," says I, as I poured out a glass, and gave Susan the bottle to clap in the locker . " that 's as

good as twenty horses,—swallow that, and then you will sail head to wind like a steamboat. That's well done; and the next time you come this way, we will pipe to grog again. Now then heave and aweigh, my lad! and take care how you weather the omnibuses: they are so long, that they shoot well a head in stays; and when they make a stern bound to pick up a passenger, they clap the cabin-door right athwart the road. Now mind your steerage, my fine fellow! and if you want a signal-man aloft, I'm the man, for I'm used to the mast-head."

Well, away we drove; and as I was rather afraid of this galloping affair, I kept a good look-out from the cabin windows. "Starboard a little," said I, as we ran by the Elephant and Castle, "or you'll be aboard of some of this convoy;—port with all, my lad, or you'll be athwart hawse of the turnpike gate.—There, steady now—that's your sort; steer right over the bridge, and take care you don't yaw us over the breastwork."

"A sailor adrift!" said one fellow. "You be d—d!" said I; upon which a whole batch of boys followed the carriage, hallooing and shouting like mad ones. The horses being all fire and tow, set to work to run a race with them; and as we luffed short round the corner to get into Parliament Street, we were nearly on our beam ends. "Shorten sail, you precious cuckoo!" said I: "why, I'm blessed if the ship is not running away with us! Bring her to the wind gently, and heave-to for a moment, if you can't reef topsails going before it."

Well, I must say this for the man at the wheel, that he steered beautifully: it was touch and go a dozen times, but that's a sign of a good pilot. He knew all the reaches fore and aft the great town; and after getting us first on one tack, then on the other, until I began to think he was beating Tom Cox's traverse, or up to a man-of-war's cruise, "There and back again," and just whilst Susan was getting on her pins to look out of the larboard quarter gallery window, he brings us up all standing, and smack goes Susan through the foremost bulk-head.

"Stopper there!" said I; meaning that the coachman should not veer any more cable, for he backed us a bit.

She was not damaged about the figure-head at all : so, after giving her rigging a shake down, and lifting her cap from her mast-head to feel if any of the lashings aloft had given way, we walked into the house. I told you some time ago of Nelson's dinner in Austria, where there were a hundred grenadiers in attendance. We had now to steer through lots of these fellows, who were squinting and chirruping as if they had swallowed a flock of sparrows.

"What name, sir?" said a chap all gold and gammon, like a dying dolphin.

"Name!" said I; "Ben Brace, to be sure, who belonged to the Agamemnon,—and she was a fine ship in her day."

Well, what does this fellow do, but he hails another man in the main-top, for we were going up the rigging step by step, and says he, in a voice that would startle a boatswain, "Ben Brace and Mr. Agamemnon!" After puffing a little, for I was not used to mount a reeve in this style, we found the man who had been hailed; and when we came nearly alongside, he opens the sliding gunter doors, and bellows like a bull—"Sir Ben Brace and Mr. Agamemnon!—Shall I take your hat and stick, sir?" said he to me, looking, Lord love you! as if butter would n't melt in his mouth.

"Thank you, shipmate," said I, "but I never part company with my kit."

"I beg your pardon, my lord," says I, as I hove in sight; for there was Lord Hennington and Jane, and two other ladies, and the attorney who had been sent down to Greenwich: so I whipped off my gold-laced scraper, and made a bow, whilst Jane came forward and took Susan by the hand kindly, and led her to the fireplace, and told her the names of the other two, who exchanged numbers with her, and showed their colours; whilst his lordship, after giving her a hail, passed on to me, and said, "Brace, my old fellow, I'm glad to see you! Ladies, let me present you to as gallant a fellow as ever sailed salt water, and who was the constant follower of Nelson."

Well, after this I walked up to the ladies, having clapped

my hat and stick under my arm ; and as I leaned forward a bit, to take hold of their dear little flippers, I lifted my leg and caught the attorney just above the shin, and set him polishing his leg with both hands. " I beg your pardon, Mr. Lawyer," says I ; and as I turned round, not knowing that I had not room to swing clear of other craft in the anchorage, the end of my stick caught a smelling-bottle which was on a table, and off that went smack over a lady's dress.

" Let me take your hat and stick," said his lordship kindly ; " for although I'm a sailor and used to these roadsteads, yet such is the fashion of blocking up the rooms now with furniture, that I myself can hardly steer through these shoals without running aground."

Well, I handed him the things, and then I looked round to see what mischief I had done. But it so happened, that although I sent the glass spinning along the table and lodged it in the lady's lap, it never broke, so there was no harm ; and the dear creatures smiled and looked so kind-hearted like, that as I looked at them, I said, " Lord bless you both ; you ought to be the wives of any officer in the navy."

" That's something like a compliment, Ben," said Jane. " Now come here, and sit by me. Don't you think you would be much better in a nice house in London than in Greenwich Hospital ?"

" Certainly not, Jane," said I. " It's all well enough for you to come to an anchor here ; but for a sailor there's no place like Greenwich. I'm a sailor in heart and soul ; I'll give up any point but this."

" Well, well," said Jane, " we will say no more about it, uncle, at present. But I forgot to introduce you to your two cousins, who are as anxious to see you as they would have been to see Nelson. Luckily for you, the bottle did not break, or you would have been obliged to make them both presents of new dresses."

All hands now began to talk away like a set of seamen on the forecastle playing goose. My lord was patting the flipper of one cousin, and the lawyer was whispering to the other, and Jane was blowing the same breeze down

Greenwich Reach about me ; when in comes the gentleman who had opened the door, and sings out, " Dinner is ready, my lady."

" Now, Brace," said his lordship, " offer your arm to that lady," pointing to my cousin, " and follow me down stairs." In the mean time he held out his arm to Susan, who dropped him a courtsey, and he very good-naturedly took her in tow and steered away.

Well, I did as I was ordered ; I clapped my arm akimbo, and says I, " By your leave, my lady," whilst I saw the attorney range up alongside of my other cousin ; so I hove to. " Avaust there !" says I, " this will never do ; why, there's one of the convoy without a tow-rope." So I hails Jane, and offers her the sleeve of my right arm. Then the lawyer got bowing for us to go foremost ; but I did not like to push on before my betters, so says I, " Heave ahead, your honour, and save the tide, whilst I bring up the rear with these two craft."

Well, we made sail ; and when we got down stairs, I saw the two chaps with cauliflower heads who had jeered me at Greenwich : they bowed their heads as we passed. " Ah," thinks I, " my lads, you're precious civil when you can't help yourselves ; but I'm blessed if I've forgotten the other day ! "

Well, we took up our different stations. I was placed on the starboard side of Jane, and Susan was on the starboard side of his lordship, so that we could see each other. The lawyer was opposite me, and I saw him watching me as if he thought I should make a mainsail haul of the silver forks ; so that, whilst I was overhauling the position of the squadron, I forgot to watch their movements. The cauliflower heads began to bustle about with plates, and his lordship began to bale out the soup from a large silver kid ; and when one of the men brought the cat-lap to me, I saw a kind of a cloth in my plate, which I clapped into my coat pocket. Jane saw it, and smiled ; and she looked at the servant, as much as to say, " Mind your own business," which I was precious near putting into English for her.

" Never mird, old Ben, my aunt Susan," said his lordship, as he saw her watching my proceedings ; " let him

keep a look-out at his end of the table, and we will have a glass of wine at ours."

"Come, Ben," said Jane, "is this all the attention you pay me?—ask me directly to have some wine with you, and I'll say yes, and get your cousin Lucy to join us. Come, my dear old uncle, may you have good health, and I dare say you wish me the same."

"That I do, and with all my heart. If all women were like you, I'm thinking they would be the admirals, and we under command: any man might lower his flag before the fire of such eyes, and ——"

"Why, you will make all the women in love with you," said Jane, "if you pay such compliments. Come let me send you some fish."

"Do allow me," said the lawyer, whose name was Marshall; and he began to serve out the fish.

"I'd a volunteered, Jane," said I, "but I've only one fin."

"I know it," said she, "like all good seamen, you are always ready to serve the ladies: but tell me, Ben, how do you like your old captain as governor of Greenwich?"

"How! why I could kiss the ground he walks upon. Whenever I see him, I think of Nelson; and there is no man alive more fit to have such honourable retirement than Sir Thomas. Every blessed one of us likes him, and I'd walk half a mile any day to hear him say, 'Ah, Brace, how do you do? better place this Greenwich than the bay in a gale.' Then he is always ready to hear us, and we look up to him with the respect which a brave man deserves."

"Ben," said his lordship, "that is as it should be when the old officer carries to his grave the respect and regard of the seamen. Fill Mr. Brace's glass." And he nodded to me, with a smile on his countenance; and I stood up and said, "Your honour's health, and long life to you!"

Well, I got ahead pretty well at dinner, and did not feel so awkward as I thought I should in such company. If we could have got rid of those cauliflower rascals, who kept giggling and grinning at each other as if they expected to see a baboon at breakfast, I should have felt pretty well

at ease. Blind as I was, I could see their impertinence ; and I could likewise detect the kind manner with which his lordship or Jane interfered if we were getting adrift in conversation.

At last we got our provisions on board, and the wine was coming alongside, when they put before each of us a large round glass, and I saw every body clap lips to it first, and then dabble fingers about in it ; and I thought it a precious dirty trick.—“ However, I’ll just take a sip,” thinks I. but when I found it was water, and that half warm enough to make a hog ill, “ I beg your pardon, sir,” says I to the gentleman who put it down, “ but if it’s all the same to you, I prefer grog.”

Very soon after, they cleared away the decks and made a sweep of the cloth ; but I’m blessed if they had not got another one underneath ! and I began to say to his lordship as I touched the spare canvass, “ There shall be no wasteful expense of any powder, shot, arms, ammunition, or other stores,—and I think your lordship ought to be brought to a court-martial for this, for it’s in direct defiance of the articles of war.”

Hereupon Jane whips in her oar. “ It’s the fashion, uncle,” says she ; “ we must follow the fashion, you know.”

“ That’s a queer fashion enough,” said I. “ I have often heard of fashion, but I never could understand it yet.”

“ Why,” said his lordship, “ fashion is doing that which a particular class of people choose to do ; but I can best explain it by your own coat. That coat is cut in the Greenwich fashion, mine is cut in the London style ; and I should be just as much out of fashion with my round hat at the Hospital, as you would be with your three-cornered scraper in Bond Street. Now do you understand it ?”

“ Yes, your honour : it’s all the same as if the great people swore the moon was made of green cheese ; then it would be the fashion to believe it.”

“ Just so, Ben. Now, take some wine ; and although it’s not the fashion, yet it’s a good old custom.”

"Here is the blessing of a grateful heart," said Jane, "upon you! Happen what may with the lawsuit, uncle," she continued, as she took my hand, "you shall never want, and your wife never shall want. Now, as I know Mr. Marshall, Lord Hennington, and yourself wish to talk over some business, we ladies will go upstairs and leave you to your council." So saying, she got under weigh; and all the women did the same.

"Now," said his lordship, as he came to the chair in which Jane had been seated,— "Now, Mr. Marshall, let us hear what you propose to do in this case. I believe I have already fully explained myself to you: I feel confident that Brace has never read a word of this twopenny confession, and therefore I feel more annoyed, that by the accident of his having sealed his envelope exactly over the enclosure, this circumstance by which he is likely to be defrauded of his money, should have arisen. As to the money, I repeat, it is not of great moment, because I shall take care that an ample sufficiency shall be settled upon Brace, and his wife after him; but I see no reason why we should give up this money without a struggle. Something may turn up. In the first place, Mr. Marshall, what is the amount left?"

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said I, just cutting out the lawyer, who was clearing his pipes for a yarn by washing down the cobwebs of his throat, "but I am ashamed to give your lordship this trouble. All the doubloons on board of a galleon would not make me happier than I am at this moment. I don't wish your lordship, therefore, to spend your money for me, when I am as rich as I care to be."

"That's all very well, my good old fellow," said Lord Hennington; "but at this moment you forget one very material point (and one which I know you would not wish to forget), the interest of your wife, and her daughter after her. You are snug moored; but, Ben, although you have weathered many a breeze, a squall may come which will swamp you, and then your wife and daughter would, without some assistance, be reduced to poverty. Now, this money, I am convinced, is honourably yours

although an accident seems likely to deprive you of it. Why, therefore, think of giving up a right, when by a little exertion we *may* maintain it? In fact, I am resolved to use my utmost endeavours to obtain it for you; so, for the present, old boy, hold your tongue, and let Mr. Marshall and myself settle it.—How much did you say was left?”

“There is no less a sum than four hundred pounds a year. The principal is held in trust for the present; but in the event of Mr. Brace’s daughter — whose name, I believe, is Tapes” — I nodded an affirmative, for the gentleman looked at me — “being married, the trust, after the death of Mr. Brace and his wife, will be given up to the husband of the daughter. Pray, how old is she, Mr. Brace?”

“About thirty, your honour,” said I: “she was an infant when old Tapes died. She has a clean run fore and aft; and although she has light air, is a wonderfully fine young woman, with a good figure-head and a capital build.”

“Why, Ben,” said his lordship, smiling, “you describe your daughter as you would a ship!”

“Certainly, my lord,” said I; “ai’nt they both alike? — have n’t they caps and bonnets, stays, rings, stein, and sternpost, all the same as a frigate?”

“Well, Mr. Marshall, what do you propose?”

“Why, my lord, knowing your lordship’s anxiety about this case, I have given it a most patient consideration. I have procured copies of the will, and I have on my own responsibility taken counsel’s opinion upon the case, as far as I could state it — not having seen the paper in Mr. Brace’s possession, and which, moreover, he seems determined not to show.”

“Nor ever will,” says I, “but to the judge upon the bench: no, not even to his lordship. If I go to my grave knowing that no mortal man has ever held that paper in his hands but myself, then I know that Tackle’s last wishes have been complied with, and I shall close my eyes without reproaching myself about the matter.”

“You see, my lord, that I was obliged to propose the

questions to counsel, founded on the supposition that the seal was removed partially; and, for all we know, the letter may at this moment be closed sufficiently to establish our case. The answers of counsel to the queries I submitted to him I have brought with me, and here they are: — ‘I am of opinion, that if the seal is totally removed, a successful defence of the point would be impossible, the words of the will being so very explicit: on the contrary, although the seal may be damaged, and even broken, yet if it can be shown that the letter is in such a state as to render its having been opened impossible, or most highly improbable, I am of opinion that the action may be safely maintained.’ Here is the paper, my lord, with the extracts of the will; and now you are as much in possession of the case as I am.”

“I’m blessed,” said I, as I gave the table a crack with my hand, which set bottles and glasses, plates and dishes a-dancing, “if I don’t think that the paper is all fast by a piece of the inside lining! but I won’t touch it again to look—not for the universal world.”

“What reason have you for thinking so, old boy?” said his lordship.

“Why, your honour, because when I saw what I had done, I gave the outside part a bit of a lift with a light hand, and it did not come open.”

“Then, Mr. Brace,” said Mr. Marshall, “will you send me the paper enclosed and sealed any way you like? — only take care not to put the seal again over the enclosed one, in order that I may have it ready to produce in court.”

“I could have saved your honour,” said I, “half the question, by saying that I will produce it myself, and no man breathing but the judge shall handle it.”

“I have some kind of feeling, Mr. Marshall,” said his lordship, “that all this will come right after all. It is but a slender hope, ’t is true, that Brace has given us, yet to that hope I will cling. You will, therefore, take it for granted that I intend to combat this business, and I wish to know how you propose to proceed. I see well enough that we must work in the dark, for old Ben is determined not to let us go on to a certainty. Now, Ben, could n’t

you bring the letter here and let me see it? we will just look and try if we can proceed with hope or not."

"No, my lord," said I, standing up: "I never told but one lie to a living man, and I'll keep my word with the dead."

"Freshen hawse, Ben," said his lordship, as he shook my hand: "I honour your feeling, and I shall not again ask you to alter your determination. You must proceed, Mr. Marshall, as well as you can."

"Then, my lord, I shall give notice to the trustees to pay the interest to Mr. Brace to-morrow, for it became due yesterday. They will refuse unless the document is produced, and we will then bring an action against them in the Common Pleas, in order to enforce the payment; we can avoid the Chancery Court altogether by getting an order to have the case tried in the Pleas; and they will be glad enough to meet our wishes, as they think they are sure of their cause, and therefore will willingly avoid delays and expenses."

"So let it be then. And now, Brace, a bumper to the success of your law-suit; and I have this consolation for you to take to bed with you, — that the more desperate your case is, the more likely you are to succeed. We'll fight them openly and honourably like seamen; and if you are beaten, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your duty by your wife and her daughter, and that you will never be worse off than you are at present; but, on the contrary, that your wife and daughter shall be under my protection. If you require any more shot in your lockers, you will apply to Mr. Marshall, and he will keep the racks full. Now, having settled our plans of operation, let's keep our spirits up a little, and hope for the best. How do you like the wine, old boy?" said his lordship, as he caught me by the hand; "and just tell us a little what you do with yourself at Greenwich from daylight to dark."

"That's easily answered, my lord," said I, "for I do nothing, and the rest help me. We sometimes spin our yarns; but I believe I have run all mine off the reel! so, like a midshipman in war-time, I turn my clothes-bag end for end,

and begin again. We have most of us got short memories for the present time, although we remember years and years ago, with the dates of the actions and the names of the officers, as well as ever."

"Are there many older than yourself, Mr. Brace?" said Mr. Marshall.

Not many, sir," said I: "we sailors don't live so long as the soldiers at Chelsea; for, generally speaking, we have more of our spars shot away, and we have had more of the wear and tear of active life; besides which, I believe what Sir William said is true, that the spirits we take on board when we first go to sea burn us up a bit. But, with all that, here am I, the last of the Agamemnons, excepting my wife, and she got christened to-day by his lordship's servant."

"We can manage another bottle, Ben," said his lordship.

"For the matter of that, my lord, it's not a bottle of black strap, which I take this to be, that will make me sail by the head; and if so be that his honour over the way there is inclined for a booze, I'm young enough yet to crack a dozen, and yet see a hole through a grating."

"You ought to write your life, Brace," said his lordship.

"Lord bless your honour!" said I, "ever since I learnt to write to Susan (which is many a year now past and gone) I have kept a regular log; ay, even now day after day I add it up; and every now and then I take a general overhaul of it. I've thought of that, my lord, for I have seen many dangers and troubles; besides which, I have tacked on some of old Tom's yarns. The other day, when I was sunning myself like a turtle on a calm day, I came athwart a navy man who had come down to see the Hospital. As he seemed to know the jib-halyards from the spanker-boom, I got unlaying my memory a bit; when an old chap told me that the officer was an author, and that it was a pity that old Brace, who had seen so much service, should only be remembered when any one looked at the Hospital books. So I made up to him, my lord, and I asked him to look at the log and see what he could

make of it. He has got the first part of it now ; and as I go on from day to day, I send it to him.— But I beg your honour's pardon, I hope you won't think it wrong of me if I ask liberty to return to Greenwich ; Susan is rather afraid like, and I should like to get her into harbour before dark."

" Well, then," said his lordship, " let us go upstairs, Mr. Marshall, and have some coffee." And away we went.

After we had taken coffee, and talked a little while longer, " Come, Susan, my girl," said I, " we must heave and aweigh."

" Is the carriage here ? " said Jane to one of the land-lubbers.

" Yes, my lady," said the fellow. So I shook hands with all hands, and kissed Jane, bless her !—ay, she was a woman with her heart in the right place.

" I shall come and see you often," said she ; " and, as you will be obliged to call at Mr. Marshall's, in your way, do not forget St. James's Square. Good b'ye, Susan ! the carriage will take you safely home."

" Good night to you, Ben ! " said his lordship, " I look forward with some hope still to defeat Mr. Hawk, after all. You will hear from me again soon ; so, once more, good night ! "

I shook him heartily by the hand. I could have said what I felt, for it was uppermost in my heart, and what is there soon finds its way to the lips. Else how is it that when the marines and afterguard are hauling away at the weather fore-topsail brace and the yard does not budge an inch, the officer of the watch lets out a volley of curses heavy enough to knock down the front line of a regular army ? He has not to look for his words,—it goes to his heart to see the duty so badly done, and his mouth is ready to bear witness to his feelings.

" I say, coachman," says I, as I clapped my head out of the starboard window, " don't you think we had better take a glass to our safe cruise, and our certainty of making the land ? Listen, my lad : you wear a cocked-hat as well as myself, and I dare say you will have no objection to my

coming on the quarter-deck ; for I'm blessed if ever I liked being a cabin passenger : so heave to, and let me get aloft. Can't you haul up alongside of a public-house ?”

“ Ay, ay, sir, as you gentlemen say on board a ship ;” and he cracks on all sail, runs down to the bridge, whips over it in the shaking of a handspike, and comes to an anchor alongside of a gin-palace on the other side.

“ Ben,” said Susan, “ remember how kind the lord and the lady have been, and how careful we ought to be not to offend them. It's true, Jane is your niece ; but if through any thing we gave the coachman an accident should happen to the carriage, they might think, and with good reason, that we ought to be contented with their arrangements, without any alteration on our part. You had better remain where you are ; and after the coachman has taken us safely home, then you can give him some liquor.”

“ Why, Susan,” said I, “ are you afraid of a capsize ? These gentlemen are not like waisters in a large ship, always dirty and always near the grog-tub. It's only now and then that they bouse their jibs up ; and surely, if the gentleman drives us in a lord's carriage, we ought to give him something to keep the cold out of his stomach.”

“ Nonsense, my dear !” said Susan : “ at any rate, I don't think Lord Hennington would like his carriage to be stopping for half an hour at a gin-palace.”

At this moment the door was opened, and I walked out. “ I shall stand the shot, my hearty,” said I ; and I own I felt more at home when I got to the tap than I did at St. James's Square. To be sure, I thought afterwards that his lordship's black strap might have been a little too heavy for me ; for when I had turned down a couple of glasses and got on the box of the coach in the air, every now and then I thought I saw two coaches instead of one. The coachman was only a sheet or two in the wind, neither drunk nor sober, but cherry merry. Notwithstanding we had steered rather wild on the way, we arrived at home at last, and Susan was right glad to get back with her old boy safe.

CHAPTER XII.

My timbers ! what lingo he'd coil and belay !
Why, 't was just all as one as high Dutch. — *Sea Song.*

" SPLICE the main brace, my hearty," said I, " before you take a fresh departure : it's rather dark, and you had better steer small when you get near the bridge. There, give us your flipper ! I suppose you know the course and distance to be run before you heave to ?"

" Why, — y — y — yes, admiral," said the coachman, who was now unfit to muster at quarters, and was getting every moment worse ; " of course I know the distance. So good night, old woman !" and he slewed the carriage end for end, and started off at a furious pace.

" Thank God, we are safe ! but I would not, on any account, that an accident should happen to the carriage," said Susan.

" Nonsense, ma'am !" said I. " Now tell me, Susan," I continued, as we drew round the fire, " how would you like to be a fine lady like Jane, — to have carriages and horses — all those servants — that house, — in short, to be the wife of a lord ?"

" As true as I live I would rather be your wife, Ben." The old girl said this so heartily that I gave her a regular broadside of kisses. " There — you need not smother me with kisses !" said she. " The great have a thousand ailments to which we are strangers. They blaze for a short time, it's true, but, like us, they die. We have certainly hardships to encounter, and die also ; but labour and employment occupy our minds and bodies, and we have our reward in unbroken sleep. On the whole, I think, therefore, we are happier in our state than they are in theirs."

" You are right, Susan. Many a time, after a hard day's work, have I gone to my hammock and slept like a top, whilst Nelson, who had all the charge, was restless and unquiet : he knew the danger, — I did not. I slept because

I was tired ; he was tired more in mind than I was in body, and yet he never closed his eyes the whole blessed night during the heavy gale in the Gulf of Lyons. You are right : if we are contented here, we need envy no one."

"No, Ben, but we may feel grateful for a kindness."

"A kindness !" said I ; "there is not in this world a kinder hearted soul than Jane ! How many thousands are there who would be ashamed to know even an old seaman — to own a pensioner in Greenwich for a relation ; and who, if they gave charity to one of their own kin, would treat them like beggars — chuck the money over the leeward quarter, and leave the half-sinking craft to bear up and pick it up the best way she could, and then make sail, showing the colours when far enough off, to make them sensible to whom they owed the obligation, whilst they dreaded being near enough to be thanked even for their charity — if charity that can be called which is ashamed of its own act. When a woman is grateful, Susan, she does not do her work by halves : she is heart and soul in the cause, and it is not a trifle which will turn her from her course.

"Lord love you all !" continued I, "dear you are to us in health — kind in sickness — always ready to cheer the sorrowful and support the afflicted ! I tell you, dame, if the law had allowed it, so fond as I am of you all, I would have married every blessed one of you. I'd rather see the flutter of a petticoat in a breeze than all the Flushing jackets in Europe."

The next morning, Tom's gravestone was all cut, and dried, and painted, and stuck up, when I took an overhaul at the anchorage. When I afterwards walked away to Susan's cottage, there she was all flutter and tremble like a leaf in a breeze.

"I told you how it would be, Ben !" she began ; "Lord Hennington's carriage was upset, and the coachman has broken his arm ; he was thrown nearly over the bridge."

"Serve him quite right too !" said I : "what business has the captain to leave the wreck the instant he runs on shore ? His lordship's a sailor ; he knows we were relieved from our watch — he can't bring us to a court mar-

tial, because the master he placed in charge as pilot did not know his navigation. I think it would have puzzled him a little, to be sure, to have taken an observation, for he would have seen so many stars that he never would have shot the right one. Any more news?"

"No, my dear," said Susan; "except that Mr. Kite was down here yesterday, and I should say almost that he was a-courting my daughter."

"Oh, oh!" said I, "is that the way the land's lying? I can see how the cat is jumping, just as plainly as I used to see the white patch in a reefer's weekly account. We shall see." Away I went with a light heart, thinking that Kite supposed I had a chance of success, or he would not have come cruising in our waters.

Well, weeks passed and little was done, until the beginning of June, when I was told that the action was to be fought on the 4th of June. I would rather it had been on the 1st of the month, for a good reason; for that was as fine a victory, with the exception of the Nile and Trafalgar, as the English navy can boast of. I was told I was to bring the paper; and accordingly I was in St. James's Square by eight o'clock in the morning, having wrapped up the thing in my silk handkerchief, and stowed it away right over my heart: I thought I could keep it pretty safe there. Jane was up, and all kindness as usual; I breakfasted with her, and in my Greenwich uniform made my appearance, with Lord Hennington and Mr. Marshall, in the Court of Common Pleas.

We were placed between the judge and the talking lawyers; and shortly after nine o'clock, in came his lordship. He was a little man, about the size of Nelson; with a thoughtful countenance, and a heaviness about his eyes, as if all his brains were crowding down upon them. I took a good look at him: he seemed a kind-hearted man, and Mr. Marshall said he was as good a judge of a case as Nelson was of a ship. "Well," said I, "if it's all fair and above-board, I have no fears."

At the further end of the table I saw Hawk, with a roll of papers, talking to a little snub-nosed fat fellow, who seemed very attentive to him; whilst a man who sat just

before the judge mustered twelve men into a kind of box, and made them take an oath. When this was done, up jumped a chap in a wig, who said something about its being a case between Benjamin Brace, John Hawk, and others ; and he said that issue was joined, and sat down. Then up jumps the gentleman to whom Lord Hennington had been speaking, and he spoke to this effect. — But before he began there was a cry of “Silence, silence !” — so says I to Marshall, “Is he going to talk for me ?” and he said, “Yes ; he is a celebrated counsel, who will, if possible, make the worse appear the better cause ; for if the seal is broken, Mr. Brace, as I told you before, your case is desperate.”

“May it please your lordship,” he began, “gentlemen of the jury, my learned friend who has opened the case has informed you who is the plaintiff and who the defendant in this action ; and I believe I may say, that in all my professional experience I have never had a harder task devolve upon me than the cause in which I am now engaged. Gentlemen, it will require but few words to place you in full possession of the circumstances connected with this case ; it will be unnecessary to call more than one witness to identify the plaintiff ; and therefore I trust that you will be detained but a very short time before your verdict is returned.

“It may be in your remembrance that in 1797 a murder was committed by one John Tackle on the person of Jane Brace, a fisherman’s daughter, at the village of Cawsand, — the murdered girl being the sister of the plaintiff. I will not harrow your feelings, gentlemen, by painting in vivid colours all the atrocities of that night ; let it be sufficient to state that this poor girl was the victim, first, of her murderer’s appetite. There are, however, one or two circumstances which it will be my painful duty to lay before you, although I doubt much whether the length of time now elapsed has obliterated them from the memory of the public. At the coroner’s inquest held on the body of this unfortunate girl, it was given in evidence that this John Tackle, being a smuggler —”

“Avaust heaving there, sir !” said I ; but Mr. Marshall pulled me back, and the judge pointed at me, and, clapping

on his quarter-deck look, said, "Silence, sir, or I shall order you out of court!" So I clapped my hand to my hair, and says I, "Certainly, my lord." Well, the lawyer leaned over and said, "My good old friend, don't interrupt me; I will do my best." — "I'll take care of him," said Lord Hennington.

"Gentlemen, I said this Tackle was a smuggler. He had decoyed the plaintiff, who was then under the name of Fearnay (and you know, gentlemen, sailors change their names as often as play-actors), to take a passage from London to Cawsand on board the Nancy, a vessel, from her peculiar build and description, admirably adapted for the business: she was a schooner —"

"A sloop, your honour," said I.

"Thank you, sir," he continued; "a sloop, then, of so careless a rig, that no one would suspect her of being employed in a contraband trade, but of a build which enabled her to sail so fast that few could have caught her. When this Tackle, who commanded her, had got through the Downs on his passage to the Eddystone Lighthouse, off which he was to fall in with a vessel from Guernsey, having smuggled articles on board, and which cargo Tackle was to run, he made attempts to lure the plaintiff into the same course of life which he himself pursued, and he used all those arguments best calculated to ensure his success: for at that time, gentlemen, the plaintiff was young in years, of a robust health, active, intelligent; and, from the various actions in which he had fought, every way calculated to face any danger, or to forward any desperate enterprise. With the true spirit of a British seaman, however, he refused so base, so unworthy an employment. Tackle, still thinking he might succeed in entrapping him, did not put into execution the design he harboured; but when he fell in with his coadjutor, one Jacob, it was resolved to keep Fearnay a prisoner, for fear of his betraying the secret now in his power, and thus leading to the detection and apprehension of Tackle.

"During the time the crew of the smugglers were employed running the cargo, the plaintiff slipped overboard and effected his escape, and hastened to the abode of his parents,

at the windows of which he saw Tackle listening and looking. It was evident, from the situation in which he was found, that he had intentions of continuing, not only his illicit trade, but his illicit connection. A scuffle ensued between the parties: the sister hearing the noise, and recognising the voices, that of her brother, and that of the man she most loved, rushed out of the house; and Tackle, in order to effect his escape, pointed a pistol at the plaintiff. At this instant his sister rushed forward to seize the weapon, in doing which she received its contents and died.

"It is requisite, gentlemen of the jury, for me to dwell upon this subject a little; for although apparently of no connection with the cause, you will find it to prove the strong integrity of the plaintiff. Gentlemen, I blush to say, an attorney was concerned with the smugglers; and he was the first husband of the plaintiff's wife. That man was named Tapes; and he had a brother of the same name, and, I fear of the same calling, inasmuch as Tackle had been employed by both of them; the latter residing at Exeter, and carrying on the trade of a wine and spirit merchant in that city. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt but that Tapes of Cawsand assisted at the smuggling of these goods, and passed them on to his brother. Gentlemen, Tapes of Cawsand was convicted before a jury of smuggling; indeed, the goods were found in an old bakehouse, the property of his wife before his marriage, and then and at that time actually in possession of Tapes. Tackle effected his escape, but Tapes was sentenced to serve on board a man-of-war for ten years: he was taken ill on board of the Hulks, and died there, leaving a wife and four children. At this moment, when starvation stared the hopeless family in the face — ay, gentlemen, when hope had withdrawn its last rays; — and you know, gentlemen, how long hope will last, even in the most desperate of cases (for we have known the felon, even with the rope about his neck and the cap drawn over his face, still cling to hope, and express his belief that he's to be pardoned even when the bolt is half drawn); at that moment, gentlemen, this gallant straightforward English sailor — I can give him no higher character than that he

was the follower of the immortal Nelson — stepped forward. He offered all he possessed to the widow of that man through whose evil ways he had lost his only sister; he not only gave with seamanlike liberality his last farthing, but he married her, and restored her to an honourable life. Gentlemen, by his exertions he supported his wife and Tapes's children. Death made fearful havock in the family; for I find in my brief, that, after the battle of Trafalgar, three of the four had died, leaving only one, a daughter, and who is mainly interested in this cause.

“Gentlemen, I now come to the most important part of this case, and to which I must beg your undivided attention. In 1801, you well remember that Lord Nelson made an attack on the flotilla off Boulogne ——”

“I beg your pardon, your honour,” said I, “but Nelson did not go himself.” I got as far as this, when his lordship hauled me down, — for I jumped up when I began to speak.

“No matter, my gallant fellow,” continued the lawyer, whose lungs must have been made of air-pumps, for he never took breath. “Gentlemen, you doubtless are well informed of the circumstance to which I allude. It was during the attack made upon that flotilla by the boats of the English squadron, that an Englishman was taken in arms against his countrymen, and was made prisoner. He was passed round the fleet and recognised as having deserted from the *Isis*, and was soon known, notwithstanding his false name, to be no other than Tackle. He was tried at a court-martial, sentenced to death, and executed. But, gentlemen of the jury, whilst a prisoner awaiting his trial, he was discovered by the plaintiff; he was visited by him, he was encouraged by him; and when life had lost all its charms, and when death itself seemed desirable, the plaintiff reminded him that the daughter, the fruit of that unhappy connection with his murdered sister, still lived: — it was the link in that chain of events which bound him strongly to existence, and with his last breath he consigned that child to this gallant fellow's charge. In that awful moment Tackle sought to make amends for his past life; and, having learned from the plaintiff that Tapes of

Exeter did not contribute to the support of his brother's children, and left his own sister-in-law on the scanty subsistence earned by a foremast seaman, gave into Mr. Brace's hand a paper, and as he gave it to him, he said, 'Tell Tapes I have given you this paper ; that it is a confession of all acts connected with my life ; that in the event of his making you an allowance, which he can well afford, you will never open it, or read one word of it ; but that you hold it secret as long as he continues to pay : with his discontinuance I absolve you from the oath I now exact of you, — ' Never, so help you God, to read it, or to allow any other to read it.'

"Gentlemen, after the execution of Tackle, the plaintiff appeared before Mr. Tapes, and in consequence of what passed at that interview, the sum of fifty pounds annually was paid until Mr. Tapes's death, which occurred early in the present year. I am aware that this last part will be distorted with the usual ability of my learned opponent ; but you, gentlemen of the jury, as fathers of families, as citizens of the world, will place a proper construction on what I have said. It surely was the bounden duty of this man to have sheltered and supported his brother's children ; for who could have a greater claim upon his affection and his ill-gotten affluence than the children of his own brother, in whose veins his own blood may be said to circulate ?

"Gentlemen of the jury, I now come to the last part requisite to imprint on your minds. By the will of the late Mr. Tapes, a sworn copy of which will be produced to you, you will perceive that he has left the sum of five hundred pounds a year to Susan Brace and her husband during the term of their natural lives, at the expiration of which the property is to descend to the daughter ; and in the event of her dying unmarried, the whole to revert to Mr. Hawk, the defendant in this action ; for he is not only the inheritor in reversion, but he is also trustee in conjunction with others. Now, gentlemen of the jury this action is brought to enforce the payment of the first dividends, which became due in April last, and which the trustees refuse to pay, until this confession, to which I

have before alluded, should be produced in court. There is a clause in the will which is to this effect: that if any suspicion should arise as to the *probability* of this confession having been read, the whole sum should at once become the property of Mr. Hawk.

“Now, gentlemen of the jury, let me draw your attention to this point. You see before you this Benjamin Brace, a seaman of worth and of reputation, the follower of Nelson, the mutilated of Trafalgar. You see one who fought side by side with the great hero of the ocean, and having served that great man in every capacity in which seaman could serve him, and having been wounded in the most glorious action on record, is now an inmate of that noble establishment, Greenwich. So far for his public character; his private life is equally deserving of your notice. In his early life he was distinguished by Nelson, and although frequently offered promotion as the reward of his services, he has frequently refused it, in order to be always about the man to whom he was so warmly attached, and with whom he entered the service. You see before you the rough and hardy son of the ocean, bold, daring, desperate; yet has his heart so much of that softness which has ever distinguished our seamen, that when the battle was won, he was ever foremost to assist his wounded adversary. Nay, gentlemen of the jury, you see before you the man tried to the utmost which human nature could support, — who caught his ruined, his murdered sister in his arms, receiving her lifeless form in the arm just raised to shed her oppressor’s blood, — you see that man, I say, not only using his utmost endeavours to save his life, but, when that hope was desperate, with ready hand proffering forgiveness — becoming the friend of his greatest, his cruellest enemy, and receiving the child from the father’s hand as he was led to the scaffold, and becoming to that child a father, a protector, and a friend. See, gentlemen of the jury, the truth so often asserted, that the boldest men have the finest hearts; and in those tears which now drop over his rugged and furrowed cheeks, the best proof of what I have advanced.

‘Is it likely, gentlemen of the jury, that such a mar-

would pawn his soul for a falsehood? Is it possible, I will ask, that such a man would stand before his God and swear to a base lie — and he has sworn, and would be ready again now to do so could his oath be received — that he never has allowed the eye of curiosity to pry into the secrets of the dead. Nay, with such scrupulous faith has he acted, that not even his legal adviser has been permitted to see the paper; and I, his counsel, to this moment am as ignorant as the child unborn whether the paper be opened or not. All I am informed of is this: that when he received this document, on which now rests his claim to that money which would support his wife in affluence, or beggar her to poverty, he carefully enveloped it in another cover; that on his way to Mr. Hawk, whither he went with all the unsuspecting frankness of a sailor, to cope with one cunning in the law, subtle in evasions, and whose greatest disgrace is his having so sought to arrive at his end, he removed the envelope: he had, unguardedly, placed his seal over that of the deceased; in removing one, he tore away the other. I see my learned adversary smile; but he must be aware that, although the seal is removed, the letter may be unopened: and this will shortly be decided by his lordship.

“It remains for me, gentlemen of the jury, having thus made you familiar with the case, only to call upon you to exercise your best judgment in this affair. It is a case where a counsel can be of little use, as the justice of the claim is founded upon a deed which will be opened in your presence. But surely, surely it would be hard to deprive this gallant veteran of his due, if through such a circumstance as the one I have mentioned he should have forfeited his claim. I do not envy that man’s conscience, who, seeing the short space of life in all probability allotted to that gallant man, could wrest from him that which it was clearly the intention of the testator should be a reward for his good faith, and enable him to pass his few remaining days in comfort and in affluence.”

After this long-winded yarn, I jumped up and took the gentleman by the hand, and said, “Thank you, sir, for your good opinion of me; although you have mentioned

one or two things I had rather never had been said ; and confound me if I can make out how you know so much about me ! Were you ever in the fore-top of the Agamemnon ? ”

“ Never mind now, my fine fellow,” said the lawyer : “ keep yourself quiet.”

“ My lord,” he continued, addressing the judge, “ I propose in the first place to identify the plaintiff.”

“ We will save my learned brother the trouble,” said little Snub-nose. “ We are satisfied he is the man ; but I presume it is your intention to produce the confession ? ”

“ Certainly,” said his lordship, “ my learned brother ” (addressing my lawyer) “ is bound to prove that the plaintiff has a claim to the estate, or his case falls to the ground.”

“ Very well, my lord,” said my man ; “ then, with your lordship’s permission, I will first put in the will ; and as my learned brother has a copy, of course he will save us the trouble also of producing any witnesses as to that document.”

“ In regard to the *will*, certainly. Perhaps, my lord, the clerk of the court had better read it to the gentlemen of the jury ? ”

“ If you please, my learned brother.”

A paper was then handed to a young man who sat before the judge, right under his feet ; and as he read, little Snub-nose kept looking towards the jury, and moving his finger about as if to draw their attention to the strongest points against me ; and when this passage was read, “ But if it appears that the seal has been removed, so as to allow the *possibility* of the document having been read by Benjamin Brace or others, then, and in that case, the entire sum aforesaid, that is to say,” &c. And so it went on repeating and repeating, but twisted off at last to the old yarn. that the money and I were to part company. Well, as I was saying, when this was read, especially the word “ *possibility*,” Snub-nose pointed so well to the men in the box, that I could understand his dumb show as well as if he had talked it all with his fingers ; he twisted about like a cock-

chafer on a pin, and made more faces, and full as ugly as a clown at a play.

When the little clerk had done reading, my man said, "Now, Mr. Brace, produce the document;" and as I unbuttoned my coat to get at it, every blessed man and woman in the court leaned over to see it, and at that moment you might have heard a pin fall. Well, I took it out, and I unlaid the parcelling of my pocket-handkerchief: upon which little Snub-nose said, "Let me see it, sir, if you please; allow me to look at it." So I turns round, and says I, "If I do, I'll be d—d, old boy!"

"You had better hand it to his lordship," said my man.

"That's just the tack I'm going to sail upon. But," said I to his lordship, "my lord, as God is above, I have never read it. I promised Tackle no man should read it, and I trust your lordship will neither read it yourself, nor satisfy the curiosity of that little man in the wig, who seems as ready to claw it as a Jamaica land-crab to taste a new-buried marine."

Well, at this there was a great laugh; but "Silence — silence in the court!" a fellow cried out, and soon put them all to rights. The clerk who read the will put out his paw for the paper; but says I, "Avaust heaving there, shipmate! every man to his station, and the cook to the fore-sheet. No man touches this but his lordship, and he won't read it either. There, my lord," said I as I gave it him, "you are the first man who has ever touched the outside of this paper; and if it was not for my wife and her daughter, neither you nor any man breathing should ever have seen it."

"There is some difficulty," said his lordship, "in this affair. Can we by any means identify the paper? who knows that this is the actual document?"

"Why, for the matter of that," said I, "I'll take my bible oath of it."

"I wish," said my opponent, "some one would keep that old fellow quiet. I can explain to your lordship, if my learned brother will allow me, that we have the original seal in court, which it appears that Tapes affixed to the document himself; and, by a paper which is in the de-

ceased's handwriting, we learn that he preserved this seal in order to prove the identity of the document."

"Give us your flipper," said I to my man; "we are all on the right tack, and we shall fetch to windward of the other old boy soon enough. Why, what a fool I was never to have thought of that before! What a treat of brandy and tobacco we'll have this blessed night!"

"Are you mad, Brace?" said Lord Hennington; "what the devil is the matter with you? Sit down directly, and be silent."

"Silence!" said his lordship: but I was standing close to his clerk, with my hand out.

"Ay," said I, in a whisper, "we'll soon silence him, and that chap Hawk too. You may clap a stopper on your jaw-tackle fall, and shove your tongue into the cable tier of your mouth, Mr. Marshall." I was then lugged down on the seat, and brought to an anchor snug enough.

"Depend upon it," said Lord Hennington to my man "we are all right. This is the way sailors express themselves when they think talking quite useless about a certain point."

"Then, my learned brother," said the judge, "I will describe the seal, and you will see if it corresponds with yours." At this moment you might have heard a pin fall in the court.

"Why," said his lordship, looking through his spectacles, "it does look a queer concern; but I cannot mistake. It is two anchors across each other, with a cable round about them."

"That's all wrong," said the fat little fellow.

"It's all right enough, my lord," said I; "that's *my* seal: I borrowed a button from off the purser's coat when I stuck my own parcelling round it. If you take off the rounding, my lord, you'll soon see the cable."

Upon which Lord Hennington, who knew the judge, said, "My lord, perhaps I can stand interpreter. He means to say that the seal you described was placed by him on his envelope, and that if your lordship removes that, you will see the original paper."

"My eye!" said I, "if that's not beating Tom Cox's traverse to get to windward."

His lordship then removed the outer covering, and held the indorse up to my adversary. The seal was almost broken off, only hanging by the end, and the description answered exactly: it was a pelican bird eating a snake. The paper was carried away with the seal, and the letter *might have* been opened. His lordship just lifting the cover, said, "It is open."

"Then, my lord, I apprehend," said the little fellow, "that it is useless to detain your lordship any longer. My learned friend will, of course, consent to a nonsuit, as from the terms in which the will is couched, there cannot remain a doubt."

"You have lost it," said Mr. Marshall to me.

"My good old fellow," said my man, as he leaned over, "I fear you have lost your cause; we must give it up."

"Not without another broadside," said I. "What! strike my colours when the victory is mine? — no: I'm blessed if that's like Nelson any how, — when you know you have the advantage, to give it up."

"Well, my learned brother," said the judge to my man, "are you contented to be non-suited?"

"Non-suited!" said I, jumping up; "why, my lord, I'm very well suited indeed. Before your lordship says a word about the money take off that covering and let's see that it's open."

"There is no occasion, my fine old fellow," said the little snub-nosed chap; "we are quite satisfied, nor do we wish to expose the secrets of the dead. I would not on any account give you such pain as I am sure it would occasion you, to hear the paper read, or even opened before the court. We are quite satisfied, I say, and do not wish to disturb your quiet of mind, which reflects honour upon you."

"I'm sure I'm much obliged to you, counsellor," said I; "and if I had not swallowed a top-chain when I was young, I should speak more smoothly: but I'll have it opened, so that we may know we are all clear and above-board. Then, if that broadside hulls us, why, down comes

the colours, and you may tow old Ben Brace into your own harbour."

Lord Hennington had been whispering to my lawyer, who now said, "My lord, I cannot hurt my client by having the paper opened; for it is his only chance, and therefore I must request your lordship so to do."

"His lordship," said the other lawyer, "has declared it open."

"It is very true," said my man, "his lordship has so declared it; but the gentlemen of the jury have not *seen* it."

"Then I shall open it," said the judge; "and, gentlemen of the jury, you will be pleased to observe that the '*SEAL is broken.*' I mention this, as the will has reference to it. And now, gentlemen of the jury ——"

"We are quite satisfied, my lord," said the ringleader of that round robin.

"No doubt, gentlemen," said his lordship; "but this must be beyond a doubt." So saying, he opened the paper, and out fell an inclosure. His lordship took it up and proceeded: "Gentlemen, on this paper — the paper which had the seal — there is not a word written;" and he handed it to my opponent; "and here, on this inclosure, are two seals; — one, the pelican with the snake, the same as that we have already referred to; and the other, a helmet, with the initials R. C."

"It's the chaplain's," said I, "my lord: it's Mr. Carter's; for when the master-at-arms came to tell Tackle that his hour was come, and the yard-rope manned, he sealed that paper, and borrowed the seal from the chaplain."

"Pooh, pooh! my good fellow," said little Snub-nose. "It's very strange you never thought of that before."

"My lord," said my man, "that is my case."

The letter was handed round to the jury, and to my and the opposite lawyer. The seal was examined — nay, tried by Tapes's seal; and Hawk and the little lawyer chattered away like young rooks; whilst Mr. Kite, making a bow to me and shaking me by the hand, walked out of the court:

"May it please your lordship — gentlemen of the

jury," began the little fat lawyer, "well might my learned opponent begin his opening speech by saying, that 'in all his professional practice a harder task had never devolved upon him than the cause in which he is now engaged;' and very certain am I, that, had he said 'a more hopeless case,' you, gentlemen of the jury, would have given him the credit due to his sincerity. There are cases so easily disposed of, and so certain in their results, that nothing has surprised me more than that the plaintiff should have had the audacity to bring the action at all, knowing that he must be defeated. Drowning men, however, catch at straws, and I dare say, to use a phrase familiar to the plaintiff, he was told 'that a chance shot might kill the devil.' Those shots may succeed in a naval action; but in an action in the Common Pleas, where we are defended by the bulwark of honesty, those shots only hit which are directed by the coolness and clear-sightedness of truth.

"Gentlemen of the jury, my learned brother was pleased to enact the biographer in regard to his client; and you may now judge how true is the saying of Coleridge, that 'literary executors make sad havock of the testator's brains.' You would suppose, from the statement made by my learned brother, that the plaintiff, although bold and resolute before the enemies of his country, was shy, stupid, wanting in common observance — a very infant in regard to transactions on shore, — and that he, poor, dear, little, tender-minded fellow! went to Mr. Hawk's house like a sheep to the slaughter, unconscious that his destruction was at hand. Gentlemen, at that interview, which my learned brother has designated as the greatest disgrace to my client, there were three gentlemen present besides the defendant, all men of high reputation and character; and one, the partner of my client, when he heard the plaintiff say that the seal was removed, actually advised him not to show the letter, but to furnish himself with a legal adviser. Does this look like inveigling the ignorant seaman to a house in order to plunder him, when one of the parties points out the danger of the navigation, and recommends the unskilful mariner to take a pilot? So far from this being the fact, the old weather-beaten seaman was received

like a friend, counselled as a friend, dismissed as a friend. The only object the defendant had was to avoid litigation, at once to relinquish the money had the seal been entire ; and no man, I am sure, would more generously have made a sacrifice of that which is clearly his own, than my honest, upright, and generous client. What follows? The attorney for the plaintiff makes a *claim*. Gentlemen of the jury, remark that,—a *claim* upon the dividends, without once acting up to the terms of the will ! And when, forsooth, he is refused this very unreasonable demand, he brings this action, in order to frighten those into subjection whom he could not openly conquer. But we are not so easily conquered. It was nothing more than a straw thrown up to show the direction of the wind, and I am very much mistaken if the plaintiff does not find himself taken aback."

" Well, then," said I, " old boy, I shall brace about, or pay round off on my heel."

" No doubt," he continued ; " and I fancy that is his object ; or, in other words, to tip his attorney leg-bail, and show him his heels as quickly as possible, paying him off by running off. Of course, gentlemen of the jury, the plaintiff's character is the most material point on which my opponent rests his claim. As for the seals, they are of little importance—bread seals may be made so as to defy detection ; and, for all we know, this precious document is nothing more than a blank sheet of paper on which the plaintiff has affixed two seals, whilst the original document, after having been read, may have been destroyed. But it is our intention to have that opened ; for it so happens that we have in court several letters written by Tackle to which we can refer, and identify, not only the handwriting, but his very remarkable signature.

" Now, gentlemen of the jury, remark the character of the plaintiff, and do not be so won over by the Greenwich uniform, or the loss of an eye or an arm, as to believe that because a man is a sailor he must necessarily be honest. The very man who is now the cause of this suit was a sailor, and he was also a murderer, a seducer, a smuggler, a convicted felon—a deserter to the enemy—a public

spectacle of an ignominious death ! Gentlemen, the plaintiff was his most intimate friend, his bosom companion ; and if there is any truth in the saying, ‘ Tell me your company, and I will tell you who you are,’ why, I think we might, without much risk of falling into error, fit the plaintiff with a character which he would not easily cast off ; and I shall produce a witness who will prove the old saying— ‘ Birds of a feather flock together.’ ”

Well, when I heard this, I thought I should have gone mad. “ D — me ! ” said I out loud, “ does this look like a bad character ? ” and I handed out my old leathern case, in which was every certificate I ever had.

“ Silence, sir ! ” said the lawyer.

“ Cast off the tow then, and make sail in the other tack,” said I. But I was soon brought to an anchor ; although I did let out, that if I could get alongside of him, I’d beat his wig about his head as the after-guard do swabs to dry the decks.

“ Listen to me, sir,” said his lordship : “ if this interruption again takes place, I shall commit you for contempt of court.”

“ Then I am to hear myself called a liar, and a scoundrel, and a smuggler, my lord, when I have these certificates to show ? ”

“ Sit down,” said Lord Hennington ; and he looked like the first lieutenant when a man is brought aft for knocking down the master-at-arms.

“ Gentlemen of the jury, it is with no feelings of delight that I draw your attention to the plaintiff’s character. As a seaman, he may have been a good one — as a sailor, a brave one ; but there are one or two circumstances so at variance with the character he *gives himself*, that it is my duty to point them out to you. When we find a man with half-a-dozen aliases, we suspect, and justly, that something is wrong : a vessel, as the plaintiff knows, never sails under false colours unless deception is intended ; and the pirate, before he throws out the black flag of plunder and of murder, approaches his victim bearing the ensign of a friendly nation.

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, how comes Mr. Ben.

amin Brace to be William Farnay on board the Nancy? Can any man doubt the reason? Why, of course, he availed himself of the leave granted by Lord Nelson, to turn his hand to an easy trade; and I shall prove that he did so assist — nay, was concerned with Tackle in his illicit traffic. We find him sipping his grog, and smoking his pipe, hand and glove — with whom, gentlemen? — with the very man who gives him some cock-and-a-bull confession, by which he frightens Mr. Tapes into granting him fifty pounds a-year! That Mr. Tapes was concerned with his brother, there is no doubt; and I make no doubt either but that he was readily assisted by both the plaintiff and Tackle: else how comes he on board the Nancy? To take a passage to Cawsand, you reply: most certainly, gentlemen, I am of the same opinion; to see his friends — but he intended to have a little profit for his trip.

“Then, again, the murder scene, so admirably introduced by my learned friend, and so cautiously told, — why, it was the result of jealousy. Tackle found another man near the premises; the girl rushes into his arms; his blood, excited by this double treachery, overstepped the bounds of prudence, and in endeavouring to grapple with his rival, the pistol accidentally went off and killed the girl; for if it were not accident, no one can imagine such uncommon generosity of mind in the plaintiff as to try to save his life, to attend him to the scaffold, and to wheedle him out of a confession, purposely prepared to alarm Tapes. Even this part, however, is not consistent with the character which my learned adversary has bestowed in such glowing terms upon the plaintiff; for one cannot easily reconcile the brave, open-hearted, generous English seaman going to his victim and saying — ‘I have you in my power, and I shall bring you to justice unless you buy me off; only give me what I ask, and you may continue to doomsday, without interruption from me, to carry on your unlawful traffic. Pay me well to keep the secret, and I will be silent and discreet. You have your option: you are rich — remember your brother’s death and infamy; come, pay me, and I am gagged at once.’ Is this the open-heartedness confirmed by tears which course down a

rugged cheek? But my learned brother was always fond of poetry and painting; his colours and his descriptions are vivid; but, like poets and painters, in aiming at too much effect, he spoils the fruits of his labour, and the skeleton is seen through the flimsy garb by which he has attempted to conceal its horror.

"But now, gentlemen, I come to a more material part. I shall put a witness in the box who will inform you that at the first intimation of Tapes's death, and the contents of his will, he went to Greenwich, found out the plaintiff, and related to him the terms of the will. He told him, if the letter was found open, that his interest in the will would be forfeited; and at that interview the plaintiff declared that the letter was unopened. He was cautioned not to open it, — nay, he was advised rather to stow it away in his securest hold; and I mention this more particularly, because it was the defendant's own partner who gave this counsel. Well, gentlemen, what do we find? We find the seal violently torn off! We are told by my learned brother that this was incautiously done in an omnibus, — as if people selected the most public of all conveyances to take off the covers of letters, and to gratify curiosity at such a hazardous peril!

"Why, gentlemen of the jury, you know human nature well, — and you will draw the same conclusion as I have done, — that the plaintiff long ago, never dreaming that Tapes would be so liberal, refreshed his own memory from the writing of Tackle, in order, should the paper be lost, to be able to give such hints that the testator could not misunderstand, and thus threaten to whisper away a character, until then, unsuspected, and keep the sword which would have cut him from society suspended by the slender hair of a seaman's secrecy. Thus holding Tapes in subjection, he counted upon the continuance of the fifty pounds a year; never calculating that one day the treachery would detect itself, and pay the bitter price of its own base ingratitude; going on from day to day, as we all do, fancying death more distant the nearer we approach it, and believing it impossible that one who had lived so long in iniquity would do an honourable act at last. Tapes, true to his

word, continued the yearly allowance, and, as a reward for this secrecy, left the possessor of the secret in affluence; but if he had himself learned the secret by breaking the seal — then he cut him off from that which would have left him beyond the wants of this world.

“Tapes is gone; he has left no kindred behind him; his sister-in-law has passed into another family, and none can say that in opening this paper we shall injure the character of the dead. Unless this is opened, we protest against any judgment against us, because, as far as the outward seal, the cause is clearly ours; and, under any circumstances, it appears to me that judgment must be in our favour, for the word expressly is, — the ‘*seal*.’ Now, had not the testator clearly intended this as a premium upon suppressed curiosity, he would have said, the ‘*seals*,’ knowing there were three; the envelope would have been mentioned. Besides, the words would lead us to imagine that there never was a sealed enclosure; or else how are we to reconcile this, — ‘But if it appears *that the seal has been removed*, so as to allow the *possibility* of the document having been read,’ &c.?”

“Now, gentlemen of the jury, it is my opinion, and his lordship will tell you it is his also, that the plaintiff has violated his engagement with Tapes. The *seal* has been removed; the document has been read, and destroyed if there was an enclosure, and a false one has been substituted, with seals easily made, and preserved. Either the paper must be opened before us — (and that is against the testator’s instructions, and will be done at the plaintiff’s hazard) — or you must find for the defendant from the words of the will.”

Here he finished; and as there was a silence, I determined to shove in my oar; so says I, “I’m blessed if that fellow would n’t make the captain of the hold believe that lime-juice and water was grog! But if ever I get alongside of him, I’ll give him such a broadside, that I’m mistaken if I don’t stave in his bread-room bulkhead, and let his provisions adrift amongst his ballast.”

“Call Mr. Kite,” said the little fellow; and another chap asked him some questions, which went to prove that

he had told me the contents of the will, and all about the seal, and so on, and that I had said at the time that the paper was unopened. Then he went on about the advice he had given me, and mentioned my engaging an attorney in an action; which I never did, excepting when I knocked down Tom Gammon on board the Captain, whom we used to call, from his precious long-winded yarns, a sea-lawyer: and what that had to do with this business I could not make out.

Well, down gets Kite out of the main top, where he had been hailing the deck and the judge for about five minutes, and my talking lawyer asked if t'other man was going to say any more; when he waved his hand and said, "Wait a minute; I've another witness to clap in the box;" and he says, "Call Mr. Hamilton."

Well, there was a bit of a bustle; and a broad-shouldered old man, with his face as yellow and as wrinkled as a Malta orange in summer-time, gets up the Jacob-ladder into the top. He takes his davy to speak the truth, and he claps on a face as demure as a methodist parson when he is preaching a charity-sermon for himself. "Who the devil can you be," thinks I, "without you're old Tapes's ghost?" So I gives my quid a turn, and begins to overhaul the stranger; and although I have a good memory, and knew every ship I ever sailed in company with, from her figure-head and the line of her paint, yet I could not make out the stranger's number, and he was not down in my signal-book.

"What is your name?" said the little talking chap.

"Jacob Hamilton," said he.

"Where are you residing at present?"

"At Calcutta Row, Blackwall."

"What trade do you follow?"

"None at present. I was captain of a small West Indiaman."

"How old are you, Mr. Hamilton?"

"Eighty-one, sir."

"Well," thinks I, "if he had come to volunteer for a ship on the peace establishment, the first lieutenant could n't have asked him more impertinent questions."

"Did you know one William Fearnay?"

“Right well, sir,” said he.

“How long ago was it since you met him?”

“In 1797.”

“Should you know him again?”

“Ay, if I were to live to one hundred and fifty I should never forget him.”

“It’s a long time back, Mr. Hamilton,” said the lawyer; “are you sure you could identify him?”

“Certainly, that is the man,” said he, and he pointed to me.

“Hulloa, shipmate!” said I, “what’s in the wind now?”

“I must beg your lordship to have that man turned out of court,” said the little fellow; “it is impossible to continue the examination under such incessant interruption.”

“But I’m blessed,” says I, “if I do turn out. That fellow’s a pirate under false colours, and you want me out of sight in order to carry off the prize without interruption. I say, my lord, that old fellow’s sailing under false colours. He has taken his davy to speak the truth, and he is working Tom Cox’s traverse with his memory ——”

“Keep him quiet,” said his lordship to Lord Hennington: and I’m blessed if even my own friend did not turn against me, and choked my luff with a threat of a gag.

“Under what circumstances did you know him?” asked the lawyer.

“When he was a smuggler with Tackle on board the Nancy, in 1797.”

“Did he belong to the Nancy?”

“Yes; he was one of her crew, and lent a hand to run the cargo on the night of the murder.”

Well, when I heard this I was regularly taken aback, and I got turning the hands up on board of myself to get the craft out of irons. I looked at him; I traced the features of Jacobs; I remembered the very rascal who wanted to cut my throat, and I looked at him; I stood upright like a man, and pointing with my finger aloft, I said, “Jacobs, is that the truth, so help you God?”

The villain’s cheeks immediately got as white as a new Portuguese ensign—he faltered in his speech—a shivering came over him, and looking as if I had suddenly pierced

him to the heart, he grasped the rail of the witness-box as if to steady himself; then turning to Hawk, and pointing at him, he stammered out, "You have done this!" and fell senseless. He was carried out of court.

A sudden alteration in opinion was visible on the countenances of the jury. My man refused to talk any more; the case was closed. The judge summed up; the paper was opened before the court; and there was not a moment's hesitation;—verdict was given for the plaintiff, for I went by that name; and Ben Brace, the last of Nelson's Agamemnons, was made a gentleman of fortune, and could have walked into any storehouse in the kingdom, whipped off the old uniform, and moored ship alongside of a lord.

"Honesty is the best policy after all," said my lawyer.

"No doubt," said I, "your honour has tried both; and I'm glad you're getting in the right tack after all."

He laughed—for he was a goodnatured chap, and used to such slaps; he shook me by the hand, bowed to Lord Hennington, and walked over to talk and laugh with his opponent, who was concerned with him in the next case.

I was taken home in the carriage, and I made the coachman just as drunk as any piper on the road. The first thing I saw was Mr. Kite with my daughter's hand up to his lips, clapping on kisses as thick as the first coat of paint on board a newly-launched ship. "Hulloa, shipmate," said I, "it is fortunate I've come to row guard, or you might have cut out that craft." Susan stepped up, and ran the yarn off the reel.

Kite had been there half an hour before me: he saw the case was sure, for he stopped to hear the beginning of the judge's palaver. He offered to make Susan's daughter an attorney; and she, after hearing the case, gave judgment in his favour; and that was to be a splice, and was one.—I have now nearly got to the clinch, so I may as well bring up at once.

"Make her a good husband, Kite, and she'll make you a happy man. Don't go beating about the bush as Hawk did, giving old Jacobs money to rob the honest and damn himself; but stretch out your hand like a seaman to save a poor honest fellow from distress. The day will come when

honesty will be rewarded, and when the launch of life will have no stoppings on the ways, but go clean off, as smoothly and as silently as a snow-fall on the sea.

“My blessings on you, Susan! God bless you! who have stood by me in fair and in foul weather — who have never let the misery of the moment give rise to the anger of words. Here am I, Ben Brace, nearly seventy-eight years of age. I hope I have done my duty like a seaman and a man in this world, and I thank God that I am able to declare, when I overhaul my log of life, that I never dealt dishonestly with my friend or cruelly by my enemy. I can also say, what Benbow said before me, and what every honest man would wish to say after me: ‘What little I have got, I have got *honestly*: it never cost a seaman a tear, or my country a farthing.’”

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